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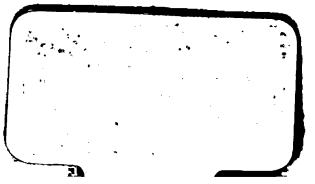

THE

BRITISH ESSAYISTS;

WITH

PREFACES,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL,

BY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS, F. S. A.

VOL. XXV.

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ADVENTURER.

N° 92——140.

——Tentanda via est; quâ me quoque possim
Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora.

VIRG.

On vent'rous wing in quest of praise I go,
And leave the gazing multitude below.

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THE ADVENTURER.

N° 92. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1753.

Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti. HOR.

Bold be the critic, zealous to his trust,
Like the firm judge inexorably just.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

In the papers of criticism which you have given to the public, I have remarked a spirit of candour and love of truth, equally remote from bigotry and captiousness; a just distribution of praise amongst the ancients and the moderns; a sober deference to reputation long established, without a blind adoration of antiquity; and a willingness to favour later performances, without a light or puerile fondness for novelty.

I shall, therefore, venture to lay before you, such observations as have risen to my mind in the consideration of Virgil's pastorals, without any inquiry how far my sentiments deviate from established rules or common opinions.

If we survey the ten pastorals in a general view, it will be found that Virgil can derive from them very little claim to the praise of an inventor. To search into the antiquity of this kind of poetry, is not my present purpose; that it has long subsisted in the east, the Sacred Writings sufficiently inform us; and we may conjecture, with great probability, that it was sometimes the devotion, and sometimes the entertainment of the first generations of mankind. Theocritus united elegance with simplicity; and taught his shepherds to sing with so much ease and harmony, that his countrymen despairing to excel, forbore to imitate him; and the Greeks, however vain or ambitious, left him in quiet possession of the garlands which the wood-nymphs had bestowed upon him.

Virgil, however, taking advantage of another language, ventured to copy or to rival the Sicilian Bard: he has written with greater splendor of diction, and elevation of sentiment: but as the magnificence of his performances was more, the simplicity was less: and, perhaps, where he excels Theocritus, he sometimes obtains his superiority by deviating from the pastoral character, and performing what Theocritus never attempted.

Yet, though I would willingly pay to Theocritus the honour which is always due to an original author, I am far from intending to depreciate Virgil; of whom Horace justly declares, that the rural muses have appropriated to him their elegance and sweetness, and who, as he copied Theocritus in his design, has resembled him likewise in his success; for, if we except Calphurnius, an obscure author of the lower ages, I know not that a single pastoral was written after him by any poet, till the revival of literature.

But though his general merit has been univer-

sally acknowledged, I am far from thinking all the production of his rural Thalia equally excellent: there is, indeed, in all his pastorals, a strain of versification which it is vain to seek in any other poet; but if we except the first and the tenth, they seem liable either wholly or in part to considerable objections.

The second, though we should forget the great charge against it, which I am afraid can never be refuted, might, I think, have perished, without any diminution of the praise of its author; for I know not that it contains one affecting sentiment or pleasing description, or one passage that strikes the imagination or awakens the passions.

The third contains a contest between two shepherds, begun with a quarrel of which some particulars might well be spared, carried on with sprightliness and elegance, and terminated at last in a reconciliation: but surely, whether the invectives with which they attack each other be true or false, they are too much degraded from the dignity of pastoral innocence: and instead of rejoicing that they are both victorious, I should not have grieved could they have been both defeated.

The poem to Pollio is, indeed, of another kind: it is filled with images at once splendid and pleasing, and is elevated with grandeur of language worthy of the first of Roman poets; but I am not able to reconcile myself to the disproportion, between the performance and the occasion that produced it: that the golden age should return because Pollio had a son, appears so wild a fiction, that I am ready to suspect the poet of having written, for some other purpose, what he took this opportunity of producing to the public.

The fifth contains a celebration of Daphnis, which has stood to all succeeding ages as the model of

pastoral elegies. To deny praise to a performance which so many thousands have laboured to imitate, would be to judge with too little deference for the opinion of mankind: yet whoever shall read it with impartiality, will find that most of the images are of the mythological kind, and, therefore, easily invented; and that there are few sentiments of rational praise or natural lamentation.

In the Silenus he again rises to the dignity of philosophic sentiment and heroic poetry. The address to Varus is eminently beautiful: but since the compliment paid to Gallus fixes the transaction to his own time, the fiction of Silenus seems injudicious; nor has any sufficient reason yet been found, to justify his choice of those fables that make the subject of the song.

The seventh exhibits another contest of the tuneful shepherds: and, surely, it is not without some reproach to his inventive power, that of ten pastorals Virgil has written two upon the same plan. One of the shepherds now gains an acknowledged victory, but without any apparent superiority; and the reader, when he sees the prize adjudged, is not able to discover how it was deserved.

Of the eighth pastoral, so little is properly the work of Virgil, that he has no claim to other praise or blame than that of a translator.

Of the ninth it is scarce possible to discover the design or tendency: it is said, I know not upon what authority, to have been composed from fragments of other poems; and except a few lines in which the author touches upon his own misfortunes, there is nothing that seems appropriated to any time or place, or of which any other use can be discovered than to fill up the poem.

The first and the tenth pastorals, whatever be determined of the rest, are sufficient to place their

author above the reach of rivalry. The complaint of Gallus disappointed in his love, is full of such sentiments as disappointed love naturally produces; his wishes are wild, his resentment is tender, and his purposes are inconstant. In the genuine language of despair, he soothes himself awhile with the pity that shall be paid him after his death:

——— *Tamen cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,*
Montibus hæc vestris: soli cantare periti
Arcades. O mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,
Vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!

———Yet, O Arcadian swains,
Ye best artificers of soothing strains!
Tune your soft reeds, and teach your rocks my woes,
So shall my shade in sweeter rest repose.
O that your birth and business had been mine;
To feed the flock, and prune the spreading vine!

WARTON.

Discontented with his present condition, and desirous to be any thing but what he is, he wishes himself one of the shepherds. He then catches the idea of rural tranquillity; but soons discovers how much happier he should be in these happy regions, with Lycoris at his side.

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori:
Hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.
Nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis;
Tela inter media, atque adversos detinet hostes.
Tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere) tantum
Alpinas, ah dura, nives, & frigora Rheni
Me sine sola vides. Ah te ne frigora lædant!
Ah tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

Here cooling fountains roll thro' flow'ry meads,
Here woods, Lycoris, lift their verdant heads;
Here could I wear my careless life away,
And in thy arms insensibly decay.
Instead of that, me frantic love detains
Mid foes, and dreadful darts, and bloody plains;

While you—— and can my soul the tale believe,
Far from your country, lonely wand'ring leave
Me, me your lover, barbarous fugitive!
Seek the rough Alps where snows eternal shine,
And joyless borders of the frozen Rhine.
Ah! may no cold e'er blast my dearest maid,
Nor pointed ice thy tender feet invade! WARTON.

He then turns his thoughts on every side, in quest of something that may solace or amuse him; he proposes happiness to himself, first in one scheme and then in another; and at last finds that nothing will satisfy:

Jam neque Hamadryades rursum, nec carmina nobis
Ipsa placent: ipsa rursum concedite sylvæ.
Non illum nostri possunt mutare labores;
Nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus,
Sithoniasque nives hyemis subeamus aquosæ;
Nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,
Æthiopum versemus oves sub sidere Cancri,
Omnia vincit amor; et nos cedamus amori.

But now again no more the woodland maids,
Nor pastoral songs delight—— Farewel, ye shades——
No toils of ours the cruel god can change,
Tho' lost in frozen deserts we should range;
Tho' we should drink where chilling Hebrus flows,
Endure bleak winter's blasts, and Thracian snows;
Or on hot India's plains our flocks should feed,
Where the parch'd elm declines his sickening head;
Beneath fierce-glowing Cancer's fiery beams,
Far from cool breezes and refreshing streams.
Love over all maintains resistless sway,
And let us love's all-conquering power obey.
WARTON.

But notwithstanding the excellence of the tenth pastoral, I cannot forbear to give the preference to the first, which is equally natural and more diversified. The complaint of the shepherd, who saw his old companion at ease in the shade, while himself was driving his little flock he knew not whither, is

such as, with variation of circumstances, misery always utters at the sight of prosperity:

Nos patriæ fines, & dulcia linquimus arva;
Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra,
Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvas.

We leave our country's bounds, our much lov'd plains;
We from our country fly, unhappy swains!
You, Tit'rus, in the groves at leisure laid,
Teach Amaryllis' name to every shade.

WARTON.

His account of the difficulties of his journey, gives a very tender image of pastoral distress:

——En ipse capellas
Protenus æger ago: hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco:
Hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellas,
Spem gregis, ah! silice in nuda connixa reliquit.

And lo! sad partner of the general care,
Weary and faint I drive my goats afar!
While scarce'ly this my leading hand sustains,
Tir'd with the way, and recent from her pains;
For 'mid yon tangled hazels as we past,
On the bare flints her hapless twin she cast,
The hopes and promise of my ruin'd fold!

WARTON.

The description of Virgil's happiness in his little farm, combines almost all the images of rural pleasure; and he, therefore, that can read it with indifference, has no sense of pastoral poetry:

Fortunate senex, ergo tua rura manebunt,
Et tibi magna satis; quamvis lapis omnia nudus,
Limosoque palus obducat pascua junco,
Non insueta graves tentabunt pabula fetas,
Nec mala vicini pecoris contagia ladent.
Fortunate senex, hic inter flumina nota,
Et fontes sacros, frigus captabis opacum,
Hinc tibi, quæ semper vicino ab limite sepes,

Hyblais apibus florem depasta salicti,
Sæpe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro.
Hinc altâ sub rupe canet frondator ad auras;
Nec tamen interea raucæ, tua cura palumbes,
Nec gemere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

Happy old man! then still thy farms restor'd
Enough for thee, shall bless thy frugal board.
What tho' rough stones the naked soil o'erspread,
Or marshy bulrush rear its wat'ry head,
No foreign food thy teeming ewes shall fear,
No touch contagious spread its influence here.
Happy old man! here 'mid th' accustom'd streams
And sacred springs, you'll shun the scorching beams;
While from yon willow-fence, thy pasture's bound,
The bees that suck their flow'ry stores around,
Shall sweetly mingle, with the whispering boughs,
Their lulling murmurs, and invite repose:
While from steep rocks the pruner's song is heard;
Nor the soft-cooing dove, thy fav'rite bird,
Meanwhile shall cease to breathe her melting strain,
Nor turtles from th' aerial elm to plain. WARTON.

It may be observed, that these two poems were produced by events that really happened; and may, therefore, be of use to prove that we can always feel more than we can imagine, and that the most artful fiction must give way to truth.

I am, Sir,

T Your humble servant,

DUBIUS.

N° 93. TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1753.

Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut Magus; & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis. HOR.

'Tis he who gives my breast a thousand pains,
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art;
With pity, and with terror tear my heart;
And snatch me, o'er the earth, or thro' the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where. POPE.

WRITERS of a mixed character, that abound in transcendent beauties and in gross imperfections, are the most proper and most pregnant subjects for criticism. The regularity and correctness of a Virgil or Horace, almost confine their commentators to perpetual panegyric, and afford them few opportunities of diversifying their remarks by the detection of latent blemishes. For this reason, I am inclined to think, that a few observations on the writings of Shakspeare, will not be deemed useless or unentertaining, because he exhibits more numerous examples of excellencies and faults, of every kind, than are, perhaps, to be discovered in any other author. I shall, therefore, from time to time, examine his merit as a poet, without blind admiration, or wanton invective.

As Shakspeare is sometimes blameable for the conduct of his fables, which have no unity; and sometimes for his diction, which is obscure and

turgid; so his characteristical excellencies may possibly be reduced to these three general heads: 'his lively creative imagination; his strokes of nature and passion; and his preservation of the consistency of his characters.' These excellencies, particularly the last, are of so much importance in the drama, that they amply compensate for his transgressions against the rules of Time and Place, which being of a more mechanical nature, are often strictly observed by a genius of the lowest order; but to pourtray characters naturally, and to preserve them uniformly, requires such an intimate knowledge of the heart of man, and is so rare a portion of felicity, as to have been enjoyed, perhaps, only by two writers, Homer and Shakspeare.

Of all the plays of Shakspeare, the Tempest is the most striking instance of his creative power. He has there given the reins to his boundless imagination, and has carried the romantic, the wonderful, and the wild, to the most pleasing extravagance. The scene is a desolate island; and the characters the most new and singular that can well be conceived: a prince who practises magic, an attendant spirit, a monster the son of a witch, and a young lady who had been brought to this solitude in her infancy, and had never beheld a man except her father.

As I have affirmed that Shakspeare's chief excellence is the consistency of his characters, I will exemplify the truth of this remark, by pointing out some master-strokes of this nature in the drama before us.

The poet artfully acquaints us that Prospero is a magician, by the very first words which his daughter Miranda speaks to him:

> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them:

which intimate that the tempest described in the preceding scene, was the effect of Prospero's power. The manner in which he was driven from his dukedom of Milan, and landed afterwards on this solilitary island, accompanied only by his daughter, is immediately introduced in a short and natural narration.

The officers of his attendant Spirit, Ariel, are enumerated with amazing wildness of fancy, and yet with equal propriety: his employment is said to be,

> ——To tread the ooze
> Of the salt deep;
> To run upon the sharp wind of the north;
> To do——business in the veins o' th' earth,
> When it is bak'd with frost;
> ——to dive into the fire; to ride
> On the curl'd clouds.

In describing the place in which he has concealed the Neapolitan ship, Ariel expresses the secrecy of its situation by the following circumstance, which artfully glances at another of his services;

> ——In the deep nook, where once
> Thou call'st me up at midnight, to fetch dew
> From the still-vext Bermudas.

Ariel, being one of those elves or spirits, 'whose pastime is to make midnight mushrooms, and who rejoice to listen to the solemn curfew;' by whose assistance Prospero has bedimm'd the sun at noonside,

> And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault,
> Set roaring war;

has a set of ideas and images peculiar to his station and office: a beauty of the same kind with that which is so justly admired in the Adam of Milton, whose manners and sentiments are all Paradisaical

How delightfully and how suitably to his character, are the habitations and pastimes of this invisible being pointed out in the following exquisite song!

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After sun-set merrily.
Merrily merrily shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

Mr. Pope, whose Imagination has been thought by some the least of his excellencies, has, doubtless, conceived and carried on the machinery in his 'Rape of the Lock,' with vast exuberance of fancy. The images, customs and employments of his Sylphs, are exactly adapted to their natures, are peculiar and appropriated, are all, if I may be allowed the expression, Sylphish. The enumeration of the punishments they were to undergo, if they neglected their charge, would, on account of its poetry and propriety, and especially the mixture of oblique satire, be superior to any circumstances in Shakspeare's Ariel, if we could suppose Pope to have been unacquainted with the Tempest, when he wrote this part of his accomplished poem.

——She did confine thee
Into a cloven pine: within which rift
Imprison'd, thou didst painfully remain
A dozen years; within which space she dy'd,
And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groans,
As fast as mill-wheels strike.

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak,
And peg thee in his knotty entrails, 'till
Thou'st howl'd away twelve winters.

For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up: urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honey-combs, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made 'em.

If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps;
Fill all thy bones with aches: make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

SHAKSPEARE.

Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
Forsakes his post or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopp'd in vials, or transfixt with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogg'd he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or allum styptics with contracting pow'r,
Shrink his thin essence like a shrivell'd flow'r:
Or as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling wheel;
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below! POPE.

The method which is taken to induce Ferdinand to believe that his father was drowned in the late tempest, is exceedingly solemn and striking. He is sitting upon a solitary rock, and weeping over-against the place where he imagined his father was wrecked, when he suddenly hears with astonishment aërial music creep by him upon the waters, and the Spirit gives him the following information in words not proper for any but a Spirit to utter:

Full fathom five thy father lies:
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change,
Into something rich and strange.

And then follows a most lively circumstance;

> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.
> Hark! now I hear them—Ding-dong-bell!

This is so truly poetical, that one can scarce forbear exclaiming with Ferdinand,

> This is no mortal business, nor no sound
> That the earth owns!—

The happy versatility of Shakspeare's genius enables him to excel in lyric as well as in dramatic poesy.

But the poet rises still higher in his management of this character of Ariel, by making a moral use of it, that is, I think, incomparable, and the greatest effort of his art. Ariel informs Prospero, that he has fulfilled his orders, and punished his brother and companions so severely, that if he himself was now to behold their sufferings, he would greatly compassionate them. To which Prospero answers,

> ——Dost thou think so, Spirit?
> ARIEL. Mine would, Sir, were I human.
> PROSPERO. And mine shall.

He then takes occasion, with wonderful dexterity and humanity, to draw an argument from the incorporeality of Ariel, for the justice and necessity of pity and forgiveness:

> Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions; and shall not myself,
> One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
> Passion'd as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?

The poet is a more powerful magician than his own Prospero: we are transported into fairy land; we are

wrapt in a delicious dream, from which it is misery to be disturbed; all around is enchantment!

——The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices;
That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then in dreaming,
The clouds, methought, would open and shew riches
Ready to drop upon me:——when I wak'd,
I cry'd to dream again!

Z

N° 94. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1753.

Monstro quod ipse tibi possis dare. JUV.

——What I shew,
Thyself may freely on thyself bestow. DRYDEN.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

You have somewhere discouraged the hope of idleness by shewing, that whoever compares the number of those who have possessed fortuitous advantages, and of those who have been disappointed in their expectations, will have little reason to register himself in the lucky catalogue.

But as we have seen thousands subscribe to a raffle, of which one only could obtain the prize; so idleness will still presume to hope, if the advan-

tages, however improbable, are admitted to lie within the bounds of possibility. Let the drone, therefore, be told, that if by the error of fortune he obtains the stores of the bee, he cannot enjoy the felicity; that the honey which is not gathered by industry, will be eaten without relish, if it is not wasted in riot; and that all who become possessed of the immediate object of their hope, without any efforts of their own, will be disappointed of enjoyment.

No life can be happy, but that which is spent in the prosecution of some purpose to which our powers are equal, and which we, therefore, prosecute with success: for this reason it is absurd to dread business, upon pretence that it will leave few intervals to pleasure. Business is that by which industry pursues its purpose, and the purpose of industry is seldom disappointed: he who endeavours to arrive at a certain point, which he perceives himself perpetually to approach, enjoys all the happiness which nature has allotted to those hours, that are not spent in the immediate gratification of appetites by which our own wants are indicated, or of affections by which we are prompted to supply the wants of others. The end proposed by the busy, is various as their temper, constitution, habits, and circumstances: but in the labour itself is the enjoyment, whether it be pursued to supply the necessaries or the conveniences of life, whether to cultivate a farm or decorate a palace; for when the palace is decorated, and the barn filled, the pleasure is at an end, till the object of desire is again placed at a distance, and our powers are again employed to obtain it with apparent success. Nor is the value of life less, than if our enjoyment did not thus consist in anticipation; for by anticipation, the pleasure which would otherwise be con-

tracted within an hour, is diffused through a week; and if the dread which exaggerates future evil is confessed to be an increase of misery, the hope which magnifies future good cannot be denied to be an accession of happiness.

The most numerous class of those who presume to hope for miraculous advantages, is that of gamesters. But by gamesters, I do not mean the gentlemen who stake an estate, against the cunning of those who have none; for I leave the cure of lunatics to the professors of physic: I mean the dissolute and indigent; who in the common phrase put themselves in Fortune's way, and expect from her bounty that which they eagerly desire, and yet believe to be too dearly purchased by diligence and industry; tradesmen who neglect their business, to squander in fashionable follies more than it can produce; and swaggerers who rank themselves with gentlemen, merely because they have no business to pursue.

The gamester of this class will appear to be equally wretched, whether his hope be fulfilled or disappointed; the object of it depends upon a contingency, over which he has no influence; he pursues no purpose with gradual and perceptible success, and, therefore, cannot enjoy the pleasure which arises from the anticipation of its accomplishment; his mind is perpetually on the rack; he is anxious in proportion to the eagerness of his desire, and his inability to effect it; to the pangs of suspense, succeed those of disappointment; and a momentary gain only embitters the loss that follows. Such is the life of him, who shuns business because he would secure leisure for enjoyment; except it happens, against the odds of a million to one, that a run of success puts him into the possession of a sum sufficient to subsist him in idleness the remainder of his life; and in this case, the idleness which made him wretched while he waited

for the bounty of fortune, will necessarily keep him wretched after it is bestowed: he will find, that in the gratification of his appetites he can fill but a small portion of his time, and that these appetites themselves are weakened by every attempt to increase the enjoyment which they were intended to supply; he will, therefore, either doze away life in a kind of listless indolence, which he despairs to exalt into felicity, or he will imagine that the good he wants is to be obtained by an increase of his wealth, by a larger house, a more splendid equipage, and a more numerous retinue. If with this notion he has again recourse to the altar of fortune, he will either be undeceived by a new series of success, or he will be reduced to his original indigence by the loss of that which he knew not how to enjoy: if this happens, of which there is the highest degree of probability, he will instantly become more wretched in proportion as he was rich; though, while he was rich, he was not more happy in proportion as he had been poor. Whatever is won, is reduced by experiment to its intrinsic value; whatever is lost, is heightened by imagination to more. Wealth is no sooner dissipated, than its inanity is forgotten, and it is regretted as the means of happiness which it was not found to afford. The gamester, therefore, of whatever class, plays against manifest odds; since that which he wins he discovers to be brass, and that which he loses he values as gold. And it should also be remarked, that in this estimate of his life, I have not supposed him to lose a single stake which he had not first won.

But though gaming in general is wisely prohibited by the legislature, as productive not only of private but of public evil; yet there is one species to which all are sometimes invited, which equally encourages the hope of idleness, and relaxes the vigour of industry.

Ned Froth, who had been several years butler in a family of distinction, having saved about four hundred pounds, took a little house in the suburbs, and laid in a stock of liquors, for which he paid ready money, and which were, therefore, the best of the kind. Ned perceived his trade increase; he pursued it with fresh alacrity, he exulted in his success, and the joy of his heart sparkled in his countenance; but it happened that Ned, in the midst of his happiness and prosperity, was prevailed upon to buy a lottery ticket. The moment his hope was fixed upon an object which industry could not obtain, he determined to be industrious no longer: to draw drink for a dirty and boisterous rabble, was a slavery to which he now submitted with reluctance, and he longed for the moment in which he should be free: instead of telling his story, and cracking his joke for the entertainment of his customers, he received them with indifference, was observed to be silent and sullen, and amused himself by going three or four times a day to search the register of fortune for the success of his ticket.

In this disposition Ned was sitting one morning in the corner of a bench by his fire-side, wholly abstracted in the contemplation of his future fortune; indulging this moment the hope of a mere possibility, and the next shuddering with the dread of losing the felicity which his fancy had combined with the possession of ten thousand pounds. A man well dressed, entered hastily, and inquired for him of his guests, who many times called him aloud by his name, and curst him for his deafness and stupidity, before Ned started up as from a dream, and asked with a fretful impatience what they wanted. An affected confidence of being well received, and an air of forced jocularity in the stranger, gave Ned some offence; but the next moment he catched him in his arms in a transport of joy, upon receiving his congratulation as

proprietor of the fortunate ticket, which had that morning been drawn a prize of the first class.

It was not, however, long before Ned discovered that ten thousand pounds did not bring the felicity which he expected; a discovery which generally produces the dissipation of sudden affluence by prodigality. Ned drank, and whored, and hired fidlers, and bought fine clothes; he bred riots at Vauxhall, treated flatterers, and damned plays. But something was still wanting; and he resolved to strike a bold stroke, and attempt to double the remainder of his prize at play, that he might live in a palace and keep an equipage; but in the execution of this project, he lost the whole produce of his lottery ticket, except five hundred pounds in Bank notes, which when he would have staked he could not find. This sum was more than that which had established him in the trade he had left; and yet, with the power of returning to a station that was once the utmost of his ambition, and of renewing that pursuit which alone had made him happy, such was the pungency of his regret, that in the despair of recovering the money which he knew had produced nothing but riot, disease, and vexation, he threw himself from the bridge into the Thames.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

CAUTUS.

N° 95. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1753.

——*Dulcique animos novitate tenebo.* OVID.

And with sweet novelty your soul detain.

It is often charged upon writers, that with all their pretensions to genius and discoveries, they do little more than copy one another; and that compositions obtruded upon the world with the pomp of novelty, contain only tedious repetitions of common sentiments, or at best exhibit a transposition of known images, and give a new appearance to truth only by some slight difference of dress and decoration.

The allegation of resemblance between authors, is indisputably true: but the charge of plagiarism, which is raised upon it, is not to be allowed with equal readiness. A coincidence of sentiment may easily happen without any communication, since there are many occasions in which all reasonable men will nearly think alike. Writers of all ages have had the same sentiments, because they have in all ages had the same objects of speculation: the interests and passions, the virtues and vices of mankind, have been diversified in different times, only by unessential and casual varieties; and we must, therefore, expect in the works of all those who attempt to describe them, such a likeness as we find

in the pictures of the same person drawn in different periods of his life.

It is necessary, therefore, that before an author be charged with plagiarism, one of the most reproachful, though, perhaps, not the most atrocious of literary crimes, the subject on which he treats should be carefully considered. We do not wonder, that historians, relating the same facts, agree in their narration; or that authors, delivering the elements of science, advance the same theorems, and lay down the same definitions: yet it is not wholly without use to mankind, that books are multiplied, and that different authors lay out their labours on the same subject; for there will always be some reason why one should on particular occasions, or to particular persons, be preferable to another; some will be clear where others are obscure, some will please by their style and others by their method, some by their embellishments and others by their simplicity, some by closeness, and others by diffusion.

The same indulgence is to be shewn to the writers of morality: right and wrong are immutable; and those, therefore, who teach us to distinguish them, if they all teach us right, must agree with one another. The relations of social life, and the duties resulting from them, must be the same at all times and in all nations; some petty differences may be indeed produced, by forms of government or arbitrary customs; but the general doctrine can receive no alteration.

Yet it is not to be desired, that morality should be considered as interdicted to all future writers: men will always be tempted to deviate from their duty, and will, therefore, always want a monitor to recal them; and a new book often seizes the attention of the public, without any other claim than that it is

new. There is likewise in composition, as in other things, a perpetual vicissitude of fashion; and truth is recommended at one time to regard, by appearances which at another would expose it to neglect; the author, therefore, who has judgment to discern the taste of his contemporaries, and skill to gratify it, will have always an opportunity to deserve well of mankind, by conveying instruction to them in a grateful vehicle.

There are likewise many modes of composition, by which a moralist may deserve the name of an original writer: he may familiarise his system by dialogues after the manner of the ancients, or subtilize it into a series of syllogistic arguments; he may enforce his doctrine by seriousness and solemnity, or enliven it by sprightliness and gaiety; he may deliver his sentiments in naked precepts, or illustrate them by historical examples; he may detain the studious by the artful concatenation of a continued discourse, or relieve the busy by short strictures, and unconnected essays.

To excel in any of these forms of writing, will require a particular cultivation of the genius; whoever can attain to excellence, will be certain to engage a set of readers, whom no other method would have equally allured; and he that communicates truth with success, must be numbered among the first benefactors to mankind.

The same observation may be extended likewise to the passions: their influence is uniform, and their effects nearly the same in every human breast: a man loves and hates, desires and avoids, exactly like his neighbour; resentment and ambition, avarice and indolence, discover themselves by the same symptoms, in minds distant a thousand years from one another.

Nothing, therefore, can be more unjust, than to charge an author with plagiarism, merely because he assigns to every cause its natural effect; and makes his personages act, as others in like circumstances have always done. There are conceptions in which all men will agree, though each derives them from his own observation: whoever has been in love, will represent a lover impatient of every idea that interrupts his meditations on his mistress, retiring to shades and solitude, that he may muse without disturbance on his approaching happiness, or associating himself with some friend that flatters his passion, and talking away the hours of absence upon his darling subject. Whoever has been so unhappy as to have felt the miseries of long-continued hatred, will, without any assistance from ancient volumes, be able to relate how the passions are kept in perpetual agitation, by the recollection of injury and meditations of revenge; how the blood boils at the name of the enemy, and life is worn away in contrivances of mischief.

Every other passion is alike simple and limited, if it be considered only with regard to the breast which it inhabits; the anatomy of the mind, as that of the body, must perpetually exhibit the same appearances; and though by the continued industry of successive inquirers, new movements will be from time to time discovered, they can affect only the minuter parts, and are commonly of more curiosity than importance.

It will now be natural to inquire, by what arts are the writers of the present and future ages to attract the notice and favour of mankind. They are to observe the alterations which time is always making in the modes of life, that they may gratify every generation with a picture of themselves.

Thus love is uniform, but courtship is perpetually varying: the different arts of gallantry, which beauty has inspired, would of themselves be sufficient to fill a volume; sometimes balls and serenades, sometimes tournaments and adventures, have been employed to melt the hearts of ladies, who in another century have been sensible of scarce any other merit than that of riches, and listened only to jointures and pin-money. Thus the ambitious man has at all times been eager of wealth and power; but these hopes have been gratified in some countries by supplicating the people, and in others by flattering the prince: honour in some states has been only the reward of military achievements, in others it has been gained by noisy turbulence and popular clamours. Avarice has worn a different form as she actuated the usurer of Rome and the stock-jobber of England; and idleness itself, how little soever inclined to the trouble of invention, has been forced from time to time to change its amusements, and contrive different methods of wearing out the day.

Here then is the fund, from which those who study mankind may fill their compositions with an inexhaustible variety of images and allusions: and he must be confessed to look with little attention upon scenes thus perpetually changing, who cannot catch some of the figures before they are made vulgar by reiterated descriptions.

It has been discovered by Sir Isaac Newton, that the distinct and primogenial colours are only seven; but every eye can witness, that from various mixtures, in various proportions, infinite diversifications of tints may be produced. In like manner, the passions of the mind, which put the world in motion, and produce all the bustle and eagerness of the busy crowds that swarm upon the earth; the

passions, from whence arise all the pleasures and pains that we see and hear of, if we analyse the mind of man, are very few; but those few agitated and combined, as external causes shall happen to operate, and modified by prevailing opinions and accidental caprices, make such frequent alterations on the surface of life, that the show, while we are busied in delineating it, vanishes from the view, and a new set of objects succeeds, doomed to the same shortness of duration with the former: thus curiosity may always find employment, and the busy part of mankind will furnish the contemplative with the materials of speculation to the end of time.

The complaint, therefore, that all topics are preoccupied, is nothing more than the murmur of ignorance or idleness, by which some discourage others and some themselves: the mutability of mankind will always furnish writers with new images, and the luxuriance of fancy may always embellish them with new decorations.

T

N° 96. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1753.

———*Fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint.* VIRG.

O happy, if ye knew your happy state! DRYDEN.

In proportion as the enjoyment and infelicity of life depend upon imagination, it is of importance that this power of the mind should be directed in its operations by reason; and, perhaps, imagination is more frequently busy, when it can only imbitter

disappointment and heighten calamity; and more frequently slumbers when it might increase the triumph of success, or animate insensibility to happiness, than is generally perceived.

An ecclesiastical living of considerable value became vacant, and Evander obtained a recommendation to the patron. His friend had too much modesty to speak with confidence of the success of an application supported chiefly by his interest, and Evander knew that others had solicited before him; as he was not, therefore, much elevated by hope, he believed he should not be greatly depressed by a disappointment. The gentleman to whom he was recommended, received him with great courtesy; but upon reading the letter, he changed countenance, and discovered indubitable tokens of vexation and regret; then taking Evander by the hand, 'Sir,' said he, 'I think it scarce less a misfortune to myself than you, that you was not five minutes sooner in your application. The gentleman whose recommendation you bring, I wish more than any other to oblige; but I have just presented the living to the person whom you saw take his leave when you entered the room.'

This declaration was a stroke, which Evander had neither skill to elude, nor force to resist. The strength of his interest, though it was not known time enough to increase his hope, and his being too late only a few minutes, though he had reason to believe his application had been precluded by as many days, were circumstances which imagination immediately improved to aggravate his disappointment: over these he mused perpetually with inexpressible anguish, he related them to every friend, and lamented them with the most passionate exclamations. And yet, what happened to Evander more than he expected? nothing that he pos-

sessed was diminished, nor was any possibility of advantage cut off; with respect to these and every other reality he was in the same state, as if he had never heard of the vacancy, which he had some chance to fill: but Evander groaned under the tyranny of imagination, and in a fit of causeless fretfulness cast away peace, because time was not stopped in its career, and a miracle did not interpose to secure him a living.

Agenor, on whom the living which Evander solicited was bestowed, never conceived a single doubt that he should fail in his attempt: his character was unexceptionable, and his recommendation such as it was believed no other could counterbalance; he, therefore, received the bounty of his patron without much emotion; he regarded his success as an event produced, like rain and sun-shine, by the common and regular operation of natural causes; and took possession of his rectory with the same temper, that he would have reaped a field he had sown, or received the interest of a sum which he had placed in the funds. But having, by accident, heard the report which had been circulated by the friends of Evander, he was at once struck with a sense of his good fortune; and was so affected by a retrospect of his danger, that he could scarce believe it to be past. 'How providential,' said he, 'was it, that I did not stay to drink another dish of tea at breakfast, that I found a hackney-coach at the end of the street, and that I met with no stop by the way!' What an alteration was produced in Agenor's conception of the advantage of his situation, and the means by which it was obtained! and yet at last he had gained nothing more than he expected; his danger was not known time enough to alarm his fear; the value of his acquisition was not increased; nor had Providence interposed farther

than to exclude chance from the government of the world. But Agenor did not before reflect that any gratitude was due to Providence but for a miracle; he did not enjoy his preferment as a gift, nor estimate his gain but by the probability of loss.

As success and disappointment are under the influence of imagination, so are ease and health; each of which may be considered as a kind of negative good, that may either degenerate into wearisomness and discontent, or be improved into complacency and enjoyment.

About three weeks ago I paid an afternoon visit to Curio. Curio is the proprietor of an estate which produces three thousand pounds a year, and the husband of a lady remarkable for her beauty and her wit; his age is that in which manhood is said to be complete, his constitution is vigorous, his person graceful, and his understanding strong. I found him in full health, lolling in an easy chair; his countenance was florid, he was gayly dressed, and surrounded with all the means of happiness which wealth well used could bestow. After the first ceremonies had passed, he threw himself again back in his chair upon my having refused it, looked wistfully at his fingers' ends, crossed his legs, inquired the news of the day, and in the midst of all possible advantages seemed to possess life with a listless indifference, which, if he could have preserved in contrary circumstances, would have invested him with the dignity of a stoic.

It happened that yesterday I paid Curio another visit. I found him in his chamber; his head was swathed in flannel, and his countenance was pale. I was alarmed at these appearances of disease; and inquired with an honest solicitude how he did. The moment he heard my question, he started from

his seat, sprang towards me, caught me by the hand, and told me, in an extacy, that he was in heaven.

What difference in Curio's circumstances produced this difference in his sensations and behaviour? What prodigious advantage had now accrued to the man, who before had ease and health, youth, affluence, and beauty? Curio, during the ten days that preceded my last visit, had been tormented with the toothache; and had, within the last hour, been restored to ease, by having the tooth drawn.

And is human reason so impotent, and imagination so perverse, that ease cannot be enjoyed till it has been taken away? Is it not possible to improve negative into positive happiness, by reflection? Can he, who possesses ease and health, whose food is tasteful, and whose sleep is sweet, remember, without exultation and delight, the seasons in which he has pined in the languor of inappetence, and counted the watches of the night with restless anxiety?

Is an acquiescence in the dispensations of Unerring Wisdom, by which some advantage appears to be denied, without recalling trivial and accidental circumstances that can only aggravate disappointment, impossible to reasonable beings? And is a sense of the Divine Bounty necessarily languid, in proportion as that bounty appears to be less doubtful and interrupted?

Every man, surely, would blush to admit these suppositions; let every man, therefore, deny them by his life. He, who brings imagination under the dominion of reason, will be able to diminish the evil of life, and to increase the good; he will learn to resign with complacency, to receive with gratitude, and possess with chearfulness: and as in this

conduct there is not only wisdom but virtue, he will under every calamity be able to rejoice in hope, and to anticipate the felicity of that state, in which 'the Spirits of the Just shall be made perfect.'

N° 97. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1753.

Χρη δε και εν τοις ηθεσιν ομοιως και εν τη των πραγματων συστασει, αει ζητειν, ἡ τι αναγκαιον, ἡ το εικος. ARIST. POET.

As well in the conduct of the manners as in the constitution of the fable, we must always endeavour to produce either what is necessary or what is probable.

'WHOEVER ventures,' says Horace, 'to form a character totally original, let him endeavour to preserve it with uniformity and consistency; but the formation of an original character is a work of great difficulty and hazard.' In this arduous and uncommon task, however, Shakspeare has wonderfully succeeded in his Tempest: the monster Caliban is the creature of his own imagination, in the formation of which he could derive no assistance from observation or experience.

Caliban is the son of a witch, begotten by a demon: the sorceries of his mother were so terrible, that her countrymen banished her into this desart island as unfit for human society: in conformity, therefore, to this diabolical propagation, he is represented as a prodigy of cruelty, malice,

pride, ignorance, idleness, gluttony, and lust. He is introduced with great propriety, cursing Prospero, and Miranda whom he had endeavoured to defile; and his execrations are artfully contrived to have reference to the occupation of his mother:

> As wicked dew, as e'er my mother brush'd
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,
> Drop on you both!————
> ————All the charms
> Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!

His kindness is, afterwards, expressed as much in character, as his hatred, by an enumeration of offices, that could be of value only in a desolate island, and in the estimation of a savage:

> I pr'ythee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;
> Shew thee a jay's nest; and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmazet. I'll bring thee
> To clust'ring filberds; and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young sea-malls from the rock————
> I'll shew thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
> I'll fish for thee, and get the wood enough.

Which last is, indeed, a circumstance of great use in a place, where to be defended from the cold was neither easy nor usual; and it has a farther peculiar beauty, because the gathering wood was the occupation to which Calyban was subjected by Prospero, who, therefore, deemed it a service of high importance.

The gross ignorance of this monster is represented with delicate judgment; he knew not the names of the sun and moon, which he calls the bigger light and the less; and he believes that Stephano was the man in the moon, whom his mistress had often shewn him: and when Prospero reminds him

that he first taught him to pronounce articulately, his answer is full of malevolence and rage:

> You taught me language; and my profit on't
> Is, I know how to curse:———

the properest return for such a fiend to make for such a favour. The spirits whom he supposes to be employed by Prospero perpetually to torment him, and the many forms and different methods they take for this purpose, are described with the utmost liveliness and force of fancy:

> Sometimes like apes, that moe and chatter at me,
> And after bite me; then like hedge hogs, which
> Lie tumbling in my bare-foot way, and mount
> Their pricks at my foot-fall: sometimes am I
> All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues
> Do hiss me into madness.

It is scarcely possible for any speech to be more expressive of the manners and sentiments, than that in which our poet has painted the brutal barbarity and unfeeling savageness of this son of Sycorax, by making him enumerate, with a kind of horrible delight, the various ways in which it was possible for the drunken sailors to surprize and kill his master:

> ———There thou may'st brain him,
> Having first seiz'd his books; or with a log
> Batter his skull; or paunch him with a stake;
> Or cut his weasand with thy knife———

He adds, in allusion to his own abominable attempt, 'above all be sure to secure the daughter; whose beauty,' he tells them, 'is incomparable.' The charms of Miranda could not be more exalted, than by extorting this testimony from so insensible a monster.

When Prospero first gives her a sight of Ferdinand, she eagerly exclaims,

——What is't? a spirit?
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, Sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

Her imagining that as he was so beautiful he necessarily be one of her father's aërial agents stroke of nature worthy admiration: as are lik her entreaties to her father not to use him harsh the power of his art;

Why speaks my father so ungently? This
Is the third man that e'er I saw; the first
That e'er I sigh'd for!——

Here we perceive the beginning of that pa which Prospero was desirous she should fee the prince; and which she afterwards more expresses upon an occasion which displays at the tenderness, the innocence, and the simp of her character. She discovers her lover emp in the laborious task of carrying wood, which Pr had enjoined him to perform. 'Would,' say 'the lightning had burnt up those logs, that you joined to pile!'

——If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that,
I'll carry't to the pile.——
——You look wearily.

It is by selecting such little and almost imp tible circumstances that Shakspeare has more painted the passions than any other writer: tion is more powerfully expressed by this simpl and offer of assistance, than by the unnatura quence and witticisms of Dryden, or the st declamations of Rowe.

Shakspeare seems to be the only poet who possesses the power of uniting poetry with propriety of character; of which I know not an instance more striking, than the image Calyban makes use of to express silence, which is at once highly poetical, and exactly suited to the wildness of the speaker:

> Pray you tread softly, that the blind mole may not
> Hear a foot-fall.———

I always lament that our author has not preserved this fierce and implacable spirit in Calyban, to the end of the play; instead of which, he has, I think, injudiciously put into his mouth, words that imply repentance and understanding.

> ———I'll be wise hereafter
> And seek for grace. What a thrice double ass
> Was I, to take this drunkard for a God,
> And worship this dull fool?

It must not be forgotten, that Shakspeare has artfully taken occasion from this extraordinary character, which is finely contrasted to the mildness and obedience of Ariel, obliquely to satirize the prevailing passion for new and wonderful sights, which has rendered the English so ridiculous. 'Were I in England now,' says Trinculo, on first discovering Calyban, 'and had but this fish painted, not an holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver.—When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.'

Such is the inexhaustible plenty of our poet's invention, that he has exhibited another character in this play, entirely his own; that of the lovely and innocent Miranda.

When Prospero first gives her a sight of prince Ferdinand, she eagerly exclaims,

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Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, Sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

Her imagining that as he was so beautiful he must necessarily be one of her father's aërial agents, is a stroke of nature worthy admiration: as are likewise her entreaties to her father not to use him harshly, by the power of his art;

Why speaks my father so ungently? This
Is the third man that e'er I saw; the first
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Here we perceive the beginning of that passion, which Prospero was desirous she should feel for the prince; and which she afterwards more fully expresses upon an occasion which displays at once the tenderness, the innocence, and the simplicity of her character. She discovers her lover employed in the laborious task of carrying wood, which Prospero had enjoined him to perform. 'Would,' says she, 'the lightning had burnt up those logs, that you are enjoined to pile!'

——If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that,
I'll carry't to the pile.——
——You look wearily.

It is by selecting such little and almost imperceptible circumstances that Shakspeare has more truly painted the passions than any other writer: affection is more powerfully expressed by this simple wish and offer of assistance, than by the unnatural eloquence and witticisms of Dryden, or the amorous declamations of Rowe.

My ambition is to be thought a man of life and spirit, who could conquer the world if he was to set about it, but who has too much vivacity to give the necessary attention to any scheme of length.

I am, in short, one of those heroic Adventurers, who have thought proper to distinguish themselves by the titles of Buck, Blood, and Nerve. When I am in the country, I am always on horse-back, and I leap or break every hedge and gate that stands in my way: when I am in town, I am constantly to be seen at some of the public places, at the proper times for making my appearance; as at Vauxhall, or Marybone, about ten, very drunk; for though I don't love wine, I am obliged to be consumedly drunk five or six nights in the week: nay, sometimes five or six days together, for the sake of my character. Wherever I come, I am sure to make all the confusion, and do all the mischief I can; not for the sake of doing mischief, but only out of frolick, you know, to shew my vivacity. If there are women near me, I swear like a devil to shew my courage, and talk bawdy to shew my wit. Under the rose I am a cursed favourite amongst them; and have had 'bonne fortune,' let me tell you. I do love the little rogues hellishly: but faith I make love for the good of the public; and the town is obliged to me for a dozen or two of the finest wenches that were ever brought into its seraglios. One, indeed, I lost: and, poor fond soul! I pitied her! but it could not be helped—self preservation obliged me to leave her—I could not tell her what was the matter with her, rot me if I could; and so it got such a head, that the devil himself could not have saved her.

There's one thing vexes me; I have much ado to avoid having that insignificant character, a good-natured fellow, fixed upon me; so that I am obliged

in my own defence to break the boy's head, and kick my whore down stairs every time I enter a night-house: I pick quarrels when I am not offended, break the windows of men I never saw, demolish lamps, bilk hackney coachmen, overturn wheel-barrows, and storm night-cellars: I beat the watchman, though he bids me good-morrow, abuse the constable, and insult the justice: for these feats I am frequently kicked, beaten, pumped, prosecuted, and imprisoned; but Tim is no flincher; and if he does not get fame, blood! he will deserve it.

I am now writing at a coffee-house, where I am just arrived, after a journey of fifty miles, which I have rode in four hours. I knocked up my block-head's horse two hours ago. The dog whipped and spurred at such a rate, that I dare say you may track him half the way by the blood; but all would not do. The devil take the hindmost, is always my way of travelling. The moment I dismounted, down dropt Dido, by Jove: and here am I all alive and merry, my old boy!

I'll tell thee what; I was a hellish ass t'other day. I shot a damn'd clean mare through the head, for jumping out of the road to avoid running over an old woman. But the bitch threw me, and I got a cursed slice on the cheek against a flint, which put me in a passion; who could help it, you know? Rot me, I would not have lost her for five hundred old women, with all their brats, and the brats of their brats to the third generation. She was a sweet creature! I would have run her five-and-twenty miles within an hour, for five hundred pounds. But she's gone!—Poor jade! I did love thee, that I did.

Now what you shall do for me, old boy, is this. Help to raise my name a little, d'ye mind: write something in praise of us sprightly pretty fellows.

I assure you we take a great deal of pains for fame, and it is hard we should be bilkt. I would not trouble you, my dear; but only I fear I have not much time before me to do my own business; for between you and I, both my constitution and estate are damnably out at elbows. I intend to make them spin out together as evenly as possible; but if my purse should happen to leak fastest, I propose to go with my last half-crown to Ranelagh gardens, and there, if you approve the scheme, I'll mount one of the upper alcoves, and repeat, with an heroic air,

> 'Ill boldly venture on the world unknown;
> It cannot use me worse than this has done.'

I'll then shoot myself thro' the head; and so good by't'ye.

Your's, as you serve me,
TIM WILDGOOSE.

I should little deserve the notice of a person so illustrious as the hero who honours me with the name of brother, if I should cavil at his principles or refuse his request. According to the moral philosophy which is now in fashion, and adopted by many of 'the dull dogs who write books,' the gratification of appetite is virtue; and appetite, therefore, I shall allow to be noble, notwithstanding the objections of those who pretend, that whatever be its object, it can be good or ill in no other sense than stature or complexion; and that the voluntary effort only is moral by which appetite is directed or restrained, by which it is brought under the government of reason, and rendered subservient to moral purposes.

But with whatever efforts of heroic virtue my correspondent may have laboured to gratify his

'thirst of glory,' I am afraid he will be disappointed. It is, indeed, true, that like the heroes of antiquity, whom successive generations have honoured with statues and panegyric, he has spent his life in doing mischief to others without procuring any real good to himself: but he has not done mischief enough; he has not sacked a city or fired a temple; he acts only against individuals in a contracted sphere, and is lost among a crowd of competitors, whose merit can only contribute to their mutual obscurity, as the feats which are perpetually performed by innumerable adventurers, must soon become too common to confer distinction.

In behalf of some among these candidates for fame, the legislature has, indeed, thought fit to interpose; and their achievements are with great solemnity rehearsed and recorded in a temple, of which I know not the celestial appellation, but on earth it is called Justice Hall in the Old Bailey.

As the rest are utterly neglected, I cannot think of any expedient to gratify the noble thirst of my correspondent and his compeers, but that of procuring them admission into this class; an attempt in which I do not despair of success, for I think I can demonstrate their right, and I will not suppose it possible that when this is done they will be excluded.

Upon the most diligent examination of ancient history and modern panegyric, I find that no action has ever been held honourable in so high a degree, as killing men: this, indeed, is one of the feats which our legislature has thought fit to rescue from oblivion, and reward in Justice Hall: it has also removed an absurd distinction, and, contrary to the practice of pagan antiquity, has comprehended the killers of women, among those who deserve the

rewards that have been decreed to homicide. Now he may fairly be considered as a killer, who seduces a young beauty from the fondness of a parent, with whom she enjoys health and peace, the protection of the laws, and the smile of society, to the tyranny of a bawd, and the excesses of a brothel, to disease and distraction, stripes, infamy and imprisonment; calamities which cannot fail to render her days not only evil but few. It may, perhaps, be alledged, that the woman was not only passive, but that in some sense she may be considered as felo de se. This, however, is mere cavil; for the same may be said of him who fights when he can run away; and yet it has always been deemed more honourable to kill the combatant than the fugitive.

If this claim then of the Blood be admitted, and I do not see how it can be set aside, I propose that after his remains shall have been rescued from dust and worms, and consecrated in the temple of Hygeia, called Surgeon's Hall, his bones shall be purified by proper lustrations, and erected into a statue: that this statue shall be placed in a niche, with the name of the hero of which it is at once the remains and the monument written over it, among many others of the same rank, in the gallery of a spacious building, to be erected by lottery for that purpose: I propose that this gallery be called the Blood's Gallery; and, to prevent the labour and expence of emblazoning the achievements of every individual, which would be little more than repeating the same words, that an inscription be placed over the door to this effect: 'This gallery is sacred to the memory and the remains of the Bloods; heroes who lived in perpetual hostility against themselves and others; who contracted diseases by excess that precluded enjoyment, and who conti-

nually perpetrated mischief not in anger but sport; who purchased this distinction at the expence of life; and whose glory would have been equal to Alexander's, if their power had not been less.'

N° 99. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1753.

—Magnis tamen excidit ausis. OVID.

But in the glorious enterprize he dy'd. ADDISON.

It has always been the practice of mankind, to judge of actions by the event. The same attempts, conducted in the same manner, but terminated by different success, produced different judgments: they who attain their wishes, never want celebrators of their wisdom and their virtue; and they that miscarry, are quickly discovered to have been defective not only in mental but in moral qualities. The world will never be long without some good reason to hate the unhappy: their real faults are immediately detected; and if those are not sufficient to sink them into infamy, an additional weight of calumny will be superadded: he that fails in his endeavours after wealth or power, will not long retain either honesty or courage.

This species of injustice has so long prevailed in universal practice, that it seems likewise to have infected speculation: so few minds are able to separate the ideas of greatness and prosperity, that

even Sir William Temple has determined, 'that he who can deserve the name of a hero, must not only be virtuous but fortunate.'

By this unreasonable distribution of praise and blame, none have suffered oftener than Projectors, whose rapidity of imagination and vastness of design raise such envy in their fellow mortals, that every eye watches for their fall, and every heart exults at their distresses: yet even a Projector may gain favour by success; and the tongue that was prepared to hiss, then endeavours to excel others in loudness of applause.

When Coriolanus, in Shakspeare, deserted to Aufidius, the Volscian servants at first insulted him, even while he stood under the protection of the household Gods; but when they saw that the Project took effect, and the stranger was seated at the head of the table, one of them very judiciously observes, 'that he always thought there was more in him than he could think.'

Machiavel has justly animadverted on the different notice taken, by all succeeding times, of the two great projectors Catiline and Cæsar. Both formed the same Project, and intended to raise themselves to power, by subverting the common-wealth: they pursued their design, perhaps, with equal abilities, and with equal virtue; but Catiline perished in the field, and Cæsar returned from Pharsalia with unlimited authority: and from that time, every monarch of the earth has thought himself honoured by a comparison with Cæsar; and Catiline has been never mentioned, but that his name might be applied to traitors and incendiaries.

In an age more remote, Xerxes projected the conquest of Greece, and brought down the power of Asia against it: but after the world had been filled with expectation and terror, his army was

beaten, his fleet was destroyed, and Xerxes has been never mentioned without contempt.

A few years afterwards, Greece likewise had her turn of giving birth to a Projector; who invading Asia with a small army, went forward in search of adventures, and by his escape from one danger, gained only more rashness to rush into another: he stormed city after city, over-ran kingdom after kingdom, fought battles only for barren victory, and invaded nations only that he might make his way through them to new invasions: but having been fortunate in the execution of his projects, he died with the name of Alexander the Great.

These are, indeed, events of ancient times; but human nature is always the same, and every age will afford us instances of public censures influenced by events. The great business of the middle centuries, was the holy war; which undoubtedly was a noble Project, and was for a long time prosecuted with a spirit equal to that with which it had been contrived: but the ardour of the European heroes only hurried them to destruction; for a long time they could not gain the territories for which they fought, and when at last gained, they could not keep them: their expeditions, therefore, have been the scoff of idleness and ignorance, their understanding and their virtue have been equally vilified, their conduct has been ridiculed, and their cause has been defamed.

When Columbus had engaged king Ferdinand in the discovery of the other hemisphere, the sailors, with whom he embarked in the expedition, had so little confidence in their commander, that after having been long at sea looking for coasts which they expected never to find, they raised a general mutiny, and demanded to return. He found means to soothe them into a permission to continue the

same course three days longer, and on the evening of the third day descried land. Had the impatience of his crew denied him a few hours of the time requested, what had been his fate but to have come back with the infamy of a vain Projector, who had betrayed the king's credulity to useless expences, and risked his life in seeking countries that had no existence? how would those that had rejected his proposals, have triumphed in their acuteness? and when would his name have been mentioned, but with the makers of potable gold and malleable glass?

The last royal Projectors with whom the world has been troubled, were Charles of Sweden and the Czar of Muscovy. Charles, if any judgment may be formed of his designs by his measures and his inquiries, had purposed first to dethrone the Czar, then to lead his army through pathless desarts into China, thence to make his way by the sword through the whole circuit of Asia, and by the conquest of Turkey to unite Sweden with his new dominions: but this mighty Project was crushed at Pultowa; and Charles has since been considered as a madman by those powers, who sent their ambassadors to solicit his friendship, and their generals 'to learn under him the art of war.'

The Czar found employment sufficient in his own dominions, and amused himself in digging canals, and building cities; murdering his subjects with insufferable fatigues, and transplanting nations from one corner of his dominions to another, without regretting the thousands that perished on the way: but he attained his end, he made his people formidable, and is numbered by fame among the demi-gods.

I am far from intending to vindicate the sanguinary projects of heroes and conquerors, and

would wish rather to diminish the reputation of their success, than the infamy of their miscarriages: for I cannot conceive, why he that has burnt cities, wasted nations, and filled the world with horror and desolation, should be more kindly regarded by mankind, than he that died in the rudiments of wickedness; why he that accomplished mischief should be glorious, and he that only endeavoured it should be criminal. I would wish Cæsar and Catiline, Xerxes and Alexander, Charles and Peter, huddled together in obscurity or detestation.

But there is another species of Projectors, to whom I would willingly conciliate mankind; whose ends are generally laudable, and whose labours are innocent; who are searching out new powers of nature, or contriving new works of art; but who are yet persecuted with incessant obloquy, and whom the universal contempt with which they are treated, often debars from that success which their industry would obtain, if it were permitted to act without opposition.

They who find themselves inclined to censure new undertakings, only because they are new, should consider that the folly of Projection is very seldom the folly of a fool; it is commonly the ebullition of a capacious mind, crouded with variety of knowledge, and heated with intenseness of thought; it proceeds often from the consciousness of uncommon powers, from the confidence of those, who having already done much, are easily persuaded that they can do more. When Rowley had completed the Orrery, he attempted the perpetual motion; when Boyle had exhausted the secrets of vulgar chemistry, he turned his thoughts to the work of transmutation.

A Projector generally unites those qualities which

have the fairest claim to veneration, extent of knowledge, and greatness of design: it was said of Catiline, 'immoderata, incredibilia, nimis alta semper cupiebat.' Projectors of all kinds agree in their intellects, though they differ in their morals; they all fail by attempting things beyond their power, by despising vulgar attainments, and aspiring to performances, to which, perhaps, nature has not proportioned the force of man: when they fail, therefore, they fail not by idleness or timidity, but by rash adventure and fruitless diligence.

That the attempts of such men will often miscarry, we may reasonably expect; yet from such men, and such only, are we to hope for the cultivation of those parts of nature which lie yet waste, and the invention of those arts which are yet wanting to the felicity of life. If they are, therefore, universally discouraged, art and discovery can make no advances. Whatever is attempted without previous certainty of success, may be considered as a Project, and amongst narrow minds may, therefore, expose its author to censure and contempt; and if the liberty of laughing be once indulged, every man will laugh at what he does not understand, every Project will be considered as madness, and every great or new design will be censured as a Project. Men, unaccustomed to reason and researches, think every enterprize impracticable, which is extended beyond common effects, or comprizes many intermediate operations. Many that presume to laugh at Projectors would consider a flight through the air in a winged chariot, and the movement of a mighty engine by the steam of water, as equally the dreams of mechanic lunacy; and would hear, with equal negligence, of the union of the Thames and Severn by a canal, and the scheme of Albuquerque, the viceroy of the Indies, who in the rage of hostility had contrived

to make Egypt a barren desart, by turning the Nile into the Red Sea.

Those who have attempted much, have seldom failed to perform more than those who never deviate from the common roads of action: many valuable preparations of chemistry are supposed to have arisen from unsuccessful inquiries after the grand elixir: it is, therefore, just to encourage those who endeavour to enlarge the power of art, since they often succeed beyond expectation; and when they fail, may sometimes benefit the world, even by their miscarriages.

T

N° 100. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1753.

Nemo repentè fuit turpissimus.—— JUV.

No man e'er reach'd the heights of vice at first. TATE.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

THOUGH the characters of men have, perhaps, been essentially the same in all ages, yet their external appearance has changed with other peculiarities of time and place, and they have been distinguished by different names, as new modes of expression have prevailed: a periodical writer, therefore, who catches the picture of evanescent

life, and shews the deformity of follies which in a few years will be so changed as not to be known, should be careful to express the character when he describes the appearance, and to connect it with the name by which it then happens to be called. You have frequently used the terms Buck and Blood, and have given some account of the characters which are thus denominated; but you have not considered them as the last stages of a regular progression, nor taken any notice of those which precede them. Their dependance upon each other is, indeed, so little known, that many suppose them to be distinct and collateral classes, formed by persons of opposite interests, tastes, capacities, and dispositions: the scale, however, consists of eight degrees; Greenhorn, Jemmy, Jessamy, Smart, Honest Fellow, Joyous Spirit, Buck, and Blood. As I have myself passed through the whole series, I shall explain each station by a short account of my life, remarking the periods when my character changed its denomination, and the particular incidents by which the change was produced.

My father was a wealthy farmer in Yorkshire; and when I was near eighteen years of age, he brought me up to London, and put me apprentice to a considerable shopkeeper in the city. There was an aukward modest simplicity in my manner, and a reverence of religion and virtue in my conversation. The novelty of the scene that was now placed before me, in which there were innumerable objects that I never conceived to exist, rendered me attentive and credulous; peculiarities, which, without a provincial accent, a slouch in my gait, a long lank head of hair, an unfashionable suit of drab-coloured cloth, would have denominated me a Greenhorn, or, in other words, a country put very green.

Green, then, I continued even in externals, near two years; and in this state I was the object of universal contempt and derision; but being at length wearied with merriment and insult, I was very sedulous to assume the manners and appearance of those, who in the same station were better treated. I had already improved greatly in my speech; and my father having allowed me thirty pounds a year for apparel and pocket-money, the greater part of which I had saved, I bespoke a suit of clothes of an eminent city taylor, with several waistcoats and breeches, and two frocks for a change: I cut off my hair, and procured a brown bob perriwig of Wilding, of the same colour, with a single row of curls just round the bottom, which I wore very nicely combed, and without powder; my hat, which had been cocked with great exactness in an equilateral triangle, I discarded, and purchased one of a more fashionable size, the fore corner of which projected near two inches further than those on each side, and was moulded into the shape of a spout: I also furnished myself with a change of white thread stockings, took care that my pumps were varnished every morning with a new German blacking-ball; and when I went out, carried in my hand a little switch, which, as it has been long appendant to the character, that I had just assumed, has taken the same name, and is called a Jemmy.

I soon perceived the advantage of this transformation. My manner had not, indeed, kept pace with my dress; I was still modest and diffident, temperate, and sober, and consequently still subject to ridicule: but I was now admitted into company, from which I had before been excluded by the rusticity of my appearance; I was rallied and encouraged by turns; and I was instructed both by precept and example. Some offers were made of

carrying me to a house of private entertainment, which then I absolutely refused; but I soon found the way into the play-house, to see the two last acts, and the farce: here I learned that by breaches of chastity no man was thought to incur either guilt or shame; but that, on the contrary, they were essentially necessary to the character of a fine gentleman. I soon copied the original, which I found to be universally admired, in my morals, and made some farther approaches to it in my dress: I suffered my hair to grow long enough to comb back over the fore-top of my wig, which when I sallied forth to my evening amusement, I changed to a queue; I tied the collar of my shirt with half an ell of black ribbon, which appeared under my neck cloth; the fore corner of my hat was considerably elevated and shortened, so that it no longer resembled a spout, but the corner of a minced pye; my waistcoat was edged with a narrow lace, my stockings were silk, and I never appeared without a pair of clean gloves. My address, from its native masculine plainness, was converted to an excess of softness and civility, especially when I spoke to the ladies. I had before made some progress in learning to swear; I had proceeded by fegs, faith, pox, plague, 'pon my life, 'pon my soul, rat it, and zookers, to zauns and the divill. I now advanced to by Jove, 'fore ged, geds curse it, and demme: but I still uttered these interjections in a tremulous tone, and my pronunciation was feminine and vicious. I was sensible of my defects, and, therefore, applied with great diligence to remove them. I frequently practised alone, but it was a long time before I could swear so much to my own satisfaction in company, as by myself. My labour, however, was not without its reward; it recommended me to the notice of the ladies,

and procured me the gentle appellation of Jessamy.

I now learned among other Grown Gentlemen to dance, which greatly enlarged my acquaintance; I entered into a subscription for country dances once a week at a tavern, where each gentleman engaged to bring a partner: at the same time I made considerable advances in swearing; I could pronounce damme with a tolerable air and accent, give the vowel its full sound, and look with confidence in the face of the person to whom I spoke. About this time my father's elder brother died, and left me an estate of near five hundred pounds per annum. I now bought out the remainder of my time; and this sudden accession of wealth and independence gave me immediately an air of greater confidence and freedom. I laid out near one hundred and fifty pounds in clothes, though I was obliged to go into mourning: I employed a court taylor to make them up; I exchanged my queue for a bag; I put on a sword, which, in appearance at least, was a Toledo; and in proportion as I knew my dress to be elegant, I was less solicitous to be neat. My acquaintance now increased every hour; I was attended, flattered, and caressed; was often invited to entertainments, supped every night at a tavern, and went home in a chair; was taken notice of in public places, and was universally confessed to be improved into a Smart.

There were some intervals in which I found it necessary to abstain from wenching; and in these, at whatever risk, I applied myself to the bottle: a habit of drinking came insensibly upon me, and I was soon able to walk home with a bottle and a pint. I had learned a sufficient number of fashionable toasts, and got by heart several toping and several bawdy songs, some of which I ventured to

roar out with a friend hanging on my arm as we scoured the street after our nocturnal revel. I now laboured with indefatigable industry to increase these acquisitions: I enlarged my stock of healths; made great progress in singing, joking, and story-telling; swore well; could make a company of staunch topers drunk; always collected the reckoning, and was the last man that departed. My face began to be covered with red pimples, and my eyes to be weak; I became daily more negligent of my dress, and more blunt in my manner; I professed myself a foe to starters and milksops, declared that there was no enjoyment equal to that of a bottle and a friend, and soon gained the appellation of an Honest Fellow.

By this distinction I was animated to attempt yet greater excellence; I learned several feats of mimickry of the under players, could take off known characters, tell a staring story, and humbug with so much skill as sometimes to take in a knowing one. I was so successful in the practice of these arts, to which, indeed, I applied myself with unwearied diligence and assiduity, that I kept my company roaring with applause, till their voices sunk by degrees, and they were no longer able to laugh, because they were no longer able either to hear or to see. I had now ascended another scale in the climax; and was acknowledged by all who knew me, to be a Joyous Spirit.

After all these topics of merriment were exhausted, and I had repeated my tricks, my stories, my jokes, and my songs, till they grew insipid, I became mischievous; and was continually devising and executing Frolics, to the unspeakable delight of my companions, and the injury of others. For many of them I was prosecuted, and frequently obliged to pay large damages: but I bore all these

losses with an air of jovial indifference, I pushed on in my career, I was more desperate in proportion as I had less to lose: and being deterred from no mischief by the dread of its consequences, I was said to run at all, and complimented with the name of Buck.

My estate was at length mortgaged for more than it was worth; my creditors were importunate; I became negligent of myself and of others; I made a desperate effort at the gaming table, and lost the last sum that I could raise; my estate was seized by the mortgagee; I learned to pack cards and to cog a die; became a bully to whores; passed my nights in a brothel, the street, or the watch-house; was utterly insensible of shame, and lived upon the town as a beast of prey in a forest. Thus I reached the summit of modern glory, and had just acquired the distinction of a Blood, when I was arrested for an old debt of three hundred pounds, and thrown into the King's Bench prison.

These characters, sir, though they are distinct, yet do not at all differ, otherwise than as shades of the same colour. And though they are stages of a regular progression, yet the whole progress is not made by every individual: some are so soon initiated in the mysteries of the town, that they are never publicly known in their Greenhorn state; others fix long in their Jemmyhood, others are Jessamies at fourscore, and some stagnate in each of the higher stages for life. But I request that they may never hereafter be confounded either by you or your correspondents. Of the Blood, your brother Adventurer, Mr. Wildgoose, though he assumes the character, does not seem to have a just and precise idea as distinct from the Buck, in which class he should be placed, and will probably die; for he seems determined to shoot himself, just at the time

when his circumstances will enable him to assume the higher distinction.

But the retrospect upon life, which this letter has made necessary, covers me with confusion, and aggravates despair. I cannot but reflect, that among all these characters, I have never assumed that of a Man. Man is a Reasonable Being, which he ceases to be, who disguises his body with ridiculous fopperies, or degrades his mind by detestable brutality. These thoughts would have been of great use to me, if they had occurred seven years ago. If they are of use to you, I hope you will send me a small gratuity for my labour, to alleviate the misery of hunger and nakedness: but, dear sir, let your bounty be speedy, lest I perish before it arrives.

I am your humble servant,

Common side, King's Bench, Oct. 18, 1753. NOMENTANUS.

N° 101. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1753.

———*Est ubi peccat.* HOR.

———Yet sometimes he mistakes.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

If we consider the high rank which Milton has deservedly obtained among our few English classics, we cannot wonder at the multitude of commentaries and criticisms of which he has been the subject. To these I have added some miscellaneous

remarks; and if you should at first be inclined to reject them as trifling, you may, perhaps, determine to admit them, when you reflect that they are new.

The description of Eden in the fourth book of the Paradise Lost, and the battle of the angels in the sixth, are usually selected as the most striking examples of a florid and vigorous imagination: but it requires much greater strength of mind to form an assemblage of natural objects, and range them with propriety and beauty, than to bring together the greatest variety of the most splendid images, without any regard to their use or congruity; as in painting, he who, by the force of his imagination, can delineate a landscape, is deemed a greater master than he, who, by heaping rocks of coral upon tesselated pavements, can only make absurdity splendid, and dispose gaudy colours so as best to set off each other.

'Sapphire fountains that rolling over orient Pearl run Nectar, roses without thorns, trees that bear fruit of Vegetable Gold, and that weep odorous gums and balms,' are easily feigned; but having no relative beauty as pictures of nature, nor any absolute excellence as derived from truth, they can only please those, who, when they read, exercise no faculty but fancy, and admire because they do not think.

If I shall not be thought to digress wholly from my subject, I would illustrate this remark, by comparing two passages, written by Milton and Fletcher, on nearly the same subject. The spirit in Comus thus pays his address of thanks to the water-nymph Sabrina:

> May thy brimmed waves for this,
> Their full tribute never miss,

From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drought, or singed air,
Never scorch thy tresses fair;
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten chrystal fill with mud:

Thus far the wishes are most proper for the welfare of a river goddess: the circumstance of summer not scorching her tresses, is highly poetical and elegant: but what follows, though it is pompous and majestic, is unnatural and far fetched;

May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore:
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tow'r and terras round;
And here and there, thy banks upon,
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon!

The circumstance in the third and fourth lines is happily fancied; but what idea can the reader have of an English river rolling Gold and the Beryl ashore, or of groves of Cinnamon growing on its banks? The images in the following passage of Fletcher are all simple and real, all appropriated and strictly natural:

For thy kindness to me shown,
Never from thy banks be blown
Any tree, with windy force,
Cross thy stream to stop thy course;
May no beast that comes to drink,
With his horns cast down thy brink;
May none that for thy fish do look,
Cut thy banks to dam thy brook;
Barefoot may no neighbour wade
In thy cool streams, wife or maid,
When the spawn on stones do lie,
To wash their hemp, and spoil the fry.

The glaring picture of Paradise is not, in my opinion, so strong an evidence of Milton's force of

imagination, as his representation of Adam and Eve when they left it, and of the passions with which they were agitated on that event.

Against his battle of the Angels, I have the same objections as against his garden of Eden. He has endeavoured to elevate his combatants, by giving them the enormous stature of giants in romances, books of which he was known to be fond; and the prowess and behaviour of Michael as much resemble the feats of Ariosto's Knight, as his two-handed sword does the weapons of chivalry: I think the sublimity of his genius much more visible in the first appearance of the fallen Angels; the debates of the infernal peers; the passage of Satan through the dominions of Chaos, and his adventure with Sin and Death, the mission of Raphael to Adam; the conversations between Adam and his wife; the creation; the account which Adam gives of his first sensations, and of the approach of Eve from the hand of her CREATOR; the whole behaviour of Adam and Eve after the first transgression; and the prospect of the various states of the world, and history of man exhibited in a vision to Adam.

In this vision, Milton judiciously represents Adam, as ignorant of what disaster had befallen Abel, when he was murdered by his brother; but during his conversation with Raphael, the poet seems to have forgotten this necessary and natural ignorance of the first man. How was it possible for Adam to discern what the Angel meant by 'cubic phalanxes, by planets of aspect malign, by encamping on the foughten field, by van and rear, by standards and gonfalons and glittering tissues, by the girding sword, by embattled squadrons, chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds?' And although Adam possessed a superior degree of knowledge, yet doubt-

less he had not skill enough in chemistry to understand Raphael, who informed him, that

> ———Sulphurous and nitrous foam
> They found, they mingled, and with subtle art,
> Concocted and Adusted, they reduced
> To blackest grain, and into store convey'd.

And, surely, the nature of cannon was not much explained to Adam, who neither knew or wanted the use of iron tools, by telling him, that they resemble the hollow bodies of oak or fir,

> With branches lopt, in wood or mountain fell'd.

He that never beheld the brute creation but in its pastimes and sports, must have greatly wondered, when the Angel expressed the flight of the Satanic host, by saying, that they fled

> ———As a herd
> Of goats or timorous flock, together throng'd.

But as there are many exuberances in this poem, there appears to be also some defects. As the serpent was the instrument of the temptation, Milton minutely describes its beauty and allurements: and I have frequently wondered, that he did not, for the same reason, give a more elaborate description of the tree of life; especially as he was remarkable for his knowledge and imitation of the Sacred Writings, and as the following passage in the Revelations afforded him a hint, from which his creative fancy might have worked up a striking picture: 'In the midst of the street of it, and of either side the river, was there the tree of life; which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every

month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.'

At the end of the fourth book, suspence and attention are excited to the utmost; a combat between Satan and the guardians of Eden is eagerly expected, and curiosity is impatient for the action and the catastrophe: but this horrid fray is prevented, expectation is cut off, and curiosity disappointed, by an expedient which, though applauded by Addison and Pope, and imitated from Homer and Virgil, will be deemed frigid and inartificial, by all who judge from their own sensations, and are not content to echo the decisions of others. The golden balances are held forth, 'which,' says the poet, 'are yet seen between Astrea and the Scorpion;' Satan looks up, and perceiving that his scale mounted aloft, departs with the shades of night. To make such a use, at so critical a time, of Libra, a mere imaginary sign of the Zodiac, is scarcely justifiable in a poem founded on religious truth.

Among innumerable beauties in the Paradise Lost, I think the most transcendent is the speech of Satan at the beginning of the ninth book; in which his unextinguishable pride and fierce indignation against GOD, and his envy towards Man, are so blended with an involuntary approbation of goodness, and disdain of the meanness and baseness of his present undertaking, as to render it, on account of the propriety of its sentiments and its turns of passion, the most natural, most spirited, and truly dramatic speech, that is perhaps, to be found in any writer whether ancient or modern: and yet Mr. Addison has passed it over, unpraised and unnoticed.

If an apology should be deemed necessary for the freedom here used with our inimitable bard, let

me conclude in the words of Longinus: 'Whoever was carefully to collect the blemishes of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and of other celebrated writers, of the same rank, would find they bore not the least proportion to the sublimities and excellencies with which their works abound.'

Z

I am, Sir,
Your humble servant,
PALÆOPHILUS.

N° 102. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1753.

——Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
Conatus non pœnitet, votique peracti? JUV.

What in the conduct of our life appears
So well-design'd, so luckily begun,
But, when we have our wish, we wish undone.
DRYDEN.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

I HAVE been for many years a trader in London. My beginning was narrow, and my stock small; I was, therefore, a long time brow-beaten and despised by those, who having more money thought they had more merit than myself. I did not, however, suffer my resentment to instigate me to any mean arts of supplantation, nor my eagerness of riches to betray me to any indirect methods of gain; I pursued my business with incessant assiduity, sup-

ported by the hope of being one day richer than those who contemned me; and had, upon every annual review of my books, the satisfaction of finding my fortune increased beyond my expectation.

In a few years my industry and probity were fully recompensed, my wealth was really great, and my reputation for wealth still greater. I had large warehouses crouded with goods, and considerable sums in the public funds; I was caressed upon the Exchange by the most eminent merchants; became the oracle of the common council; was solicited to engage in all commercial undertakings; was flattered with the hopes of becoming in a short time one of the directors of a wealthy company; and, to complete my mercantile honours, enjoyed the expensive happiness of fining for sheriff.

Riches, you know, easily produce riches; when I had arrived to this degree of wealth, I had no longer any obstruction or opposition to fear; new acquisitions were hourly brought within my reach, and I continued for some years longer to heap thousands upon thousands.

At last I resolved to complete the circle of a citizen's prosperity by the purchase of an estate in the country, and to close my life in retirement. From the hour that this design entered my imagination, I found the fatigues of my employment every day more oppressive, and persuaded myself that I was no longer equal to perpetual attention, and that my health would soon be destroyed by the torment and distraction of extensive business. I could image to myself no happiness, but in vacant jollity, and uninterrupted leisure; nor entertain my friends with any other topic, than the vexation and uncertainty of trade, and the happiness of rural privacy.

But notwithstanding these declarations, I could not at once reconcile myself to the thought of ceasing to get money; and though I was every day inquiring for a purchase, I found some reason for rejecting all that were offered me; and, indeed, had accumulated so many beauties and conveniences in my idea of the spot, where I was finally to be happy, that, perhaps, the world might have been travelled over, without discovery of a place which would not have been defective in some particular.

Thus I went on still talking of retirement, and still refusing to retire; my friends began to laugh at my delays, and I grew ashamed to trifle longer with my own inclinations; an estate was at length purchased, I transferred my stock to a prudent young man who had married my daughter, went down into the country, and commenced lord of a spacious manor.

Here for some time I found happiness equal to my expectation. I reformed the old house according to the advice of the best architects, I threw down the walls of the garden, and inclosed it with palisades, planted long avenues of trees, filled a green-house with exotic plants, dug a new canal, and threw the earth into the old moat.

The fame of these expensive improvements brought in all the country to see the shew. I entertained my visitors with great liberality, led them round my gardens, shewed them my apartments, laid before them plans for new decorations, and was gratified by the wonder of some and the envy of others.

I was envied; but how little can one man judge of the condition of another? The time was now coming, in which affluence and splendor could no longer make me pleased with myself. I had built till the imagination of the architect was

exhausted; I had added one convenience to another; till I knew not what more to wish or to design; I had laid out my gardens, planted my park, and completed my water-works; and what now remained to be done? what, but to look up to turrets, of which when they were once raised I had no farther use, to range over apartments where time was tarnishing the furniture, to stand by the cascade of which I scarcely now perceived the sound, and to watch the growth of woods that must give their shade to a distant generation.

In this gloomy inactivity, is every day begun and ended: the happiness that I have been so long procuring is now at an end; because it has been procured; I wander from room to room till I am weary of myself; I ride out to a neighbouring hill in the centre of my estate, from whence all my lands lie in prospect round me; I see nothing that I have not seen before, and return home disappointed, though I knew that I had nothing to expect.

In my happy days of business I had been accustomed to rise early in the morning; and remember the time when I grieved that the night came so soon upon me, and obliged me for a few hours to shut out affluence and prosperity. I now seldom see the rising sun, but to 'tell him,' with the fallen angel, 'how I hate his beams.' I wake from sleep as to languor or imprisonment, and have no employment for the first hour but to consider by what art I shall rid myself of the second. I protract the breakfast as long as I can, because when it is ended I have no call for my attention, till I can with some degree of decency grow impatient for my dinner. If I could dine all my life, I should be happy; I eat not because I am hungry, but because I am idle; but alas! the time quickly comes when I can eat no longer; and so ill does my constitution second my inclina-

tion, that I cannot bear strong liquors; seven hours must then be endured before I shall sup; but supper comes at last, the more welcome as it is in a short time succeeded by sleep.

Such, Mr. Adventurer, is the happiness, the hope of which seduced me from the duties and pleasures of a mercantile life. I shall be told by those who read my narrative, that there are many means of innocent amusement, and many schemes of useful employment, which I do not appear ever to have known; and that nature and art have provided pleasures, by which, without the drudgery of settled business, the active may be engaged, the solitary soothed, and the social entertained.

These arts, sir, I have tried. When first I took possession of my estate, in conformity to the taste of my neighbours, I bought guns and nets, filled my kennel with dogs, and my stable with horses; but a little experience shewed me, that these instruments of rural felicity would afford me few gratifications. I never shot but to miss the mark, and, to confess the truth, was afraid of the fire of my own gun. I could discover no music in the cry of the dogs, nor could divest myself of pity for the animal whose peaceful and inoffensive life was sacrificed to our sport. I was not, indeed, always at leisure to reflect upon her danger; for my horse, who had been bred to the chase, did not always regard my choice either of speed or way, but leaped hedges and ditches at his own discretion, and hurried me along with the dogs, to the great diversion of my brother sportsmen. His eagerness of pursuit once incited him to swim a river; and I had leisure to resolve in the water, that I would never hazard my life again for the destruction of a hare.

I then ordered books to be procured, and by the direction of the vicar had in a few weeks a closet

elegantly furnished. You will, perhaps, be surprised when I shall tell you, that when once I had ranged them according to their sizes, and piled them up in regular gradations, I had received all the pleasure which they could give me. I am not able to excite in myself any curiosity after events which have been long passed, and in which I can, therefore, have no interest: I am utterly unconcerned to know whether Tully or Demosthenes excelled in oratory, whether Hannibal lost Italy by his own negligence or the corruption of his countrymen. I have no skill in controversial learning, nor can conceive why so many volumes should have been written upon questions, which I have lived so long and so happily without understanding. I once resolved to go through the volumes relating to the office of justice of the peace, but found them so crabbed and intricate, that in less than a month I desisted in despair, and resolved to supply my deficiencies by paying a competent salary to a skilful clerk.

I am naturally inclined to hospitality, and for some time kept up a constant intercourse of visits with the neighbouring gentlemen: but though they are easily brought about me by better wine than they can find at any other house, I am not much relieved by their conversation; they have no skill in commerce or the stocks, and I have no knowledge of the history of families or the factions of the country; so that when the first civilities are over, they usually talk to one another, and I am left alone in the midst of the company. Though I cannot drink myself, I am obliged to encourage the circulation of the glass; their mirth grows more turbulent and obstreperous; and before their merriment is at an end, I am sick with disgust, and per-

haps, reproached with my sobriety, or by some sly insinuations insulted as a cit.

Such, Mr. Adventurer, is the life to which I am condemned by a foolish endeavour to be happy by imitation; such is the happiness to which I pleased myself with approaching, and which I considered as the chief end of my cares and my labours. I toiled year after year with chearfulness, in expectation of the happy hour in which I might be idle; the privilege of idleness is attained, but has not brought with it the blessing of tranquillity.

T I am,

Yours, &c.

MERCATOR.

N° 103. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1753.

——Quid enim ratione timemus,
Aut cupimus?—— JUV.

How void of reason are our hopes and fears! DRYDEN.

In those remote times when, by the intervention of Fairies, men received good and evil, which succeeding generations could expect only from natural causes, Soliman, a mighty prince, reigned over a thousand provinces in the distant regions of the east. It is recorded of Soliman, that he had no favourite; but among the principal nobles of his court was Omaraddin.

Omaraddin had two daughters, Almerine and Shelimah. At the birth of Almerine, the fairy Elfarina had presided; and in compliance with the im-

portunate and reiterated request of the parents, had endowed her with every natural excellence both of body and mind, and decreed that 'she should be sought in marriage by a sovereign prince.'

When the wife of Omaraddin was pregnant with Shelimah, the fairy Elfarina was again invoked; at which Farimina, another power of the aërial kingdom, was offended. Farimina was inexorable and cruel; the number of her votaries, therefore, was few. Elfarina was placable and benevolent; and Fairies of this character were observed to be superior in power, whether because it is the nature of vice to defeat its own purpose, or whether the calm and equal tenor of a virtuous mind prevents those mistakes, which are committed in the tumult and precipitation of outrageous malevolence. But Farimina, from whatever cause, resolved that her influence should not be wanting; she, therefore, as far as she was able, precluded the influence of Elfarina, by first pronouncing the incantation which determined the fortune of the infant, whom she discovered by divination to be a girl. Farimina, that the innocent object of her malice might be despised by others, and perpetually employed in tormenting herself, decreed, 'that her person should be rendered hideous by every species of deformity, and that all her wishes should spontaneously produce an opposite effect.'

The parents dreaded the birth of the infant under this malediction, with which Elfarina had acquainted them, and which she could not reverse. The moment they beheld it, they were solicitous only to conceal it from the world; they considered the complicated deformity of unhappy Shelimah, as some reproach to themselves; and as they could not hope to change her appearance, they did not find themselves interested in her felicity. They

made no request to Elfarina, that she would by any intellectual endowment alleviate miseries which they should not participate, but seemed content that a being so hideous should suffer perpetual disappointment; and, indeed, they concurred to injure an infant which they could not behold with complacency, by sending her with only one attendant to a remote castle which stood on the confines of a wood.

Elfarina, however, did not thus forsake innocence in distress; but to counterbalance the evils of obscurity, neglect, and ugliness, she decreed, that 'to the taste of Shelimah the coarsest food should be the most exquisite dainty; that the rags which covered her, should in her estimation be equal to cloth of gold; that she should prize a palace less than a cottage; and that in these circumstances love should be a stranger to her breast.' To prevent the vexation which would arise from the continual disappointment of her wishes, appeared at first to be more difficult; but this was at length perfectly effected by endowing her with Content.

While Shelimah was immured in a remote castle, neglected and forgotten, every city in the dominions of Soliman contributed to decorate the person or cultivate the mind of Almerine. The house of her father was the resort of all who excelled in learning of whatever class; and as the wit of Almerine was equal to her beauty, her knowledge was soon equal to her wit.

Thus accomplished, she became the object of universal admiration; every heart throbbed at her approach, every tongue was silent when she spoke; at the glance of her eye every cheek was covered with blushes of diffidence or desire, and at her command every foot became swift as that of the roe. But Almerine, whom ambition was thus jea-

learn to obey, who was reverenced by hoary wisdom, and beloved by youthful beauty, was perhaps the most wretched of her sex. Perpetual adulation had made her haughty and fierce; her penetration and delicacy rendered almost every object offensive; she was disgusted with imperfections which others could not discover; her breast was corroded by detestation, when others were softened by pity; she lost the sweetness of sleep by the want of exercise, and the relish of food by continual luxury: but her life became yet more wretched, by her sensibility of that passion, on which the happiness of life is believed chiefly to depend.

Nourassin, the physician of Soliman, was of noble birth, and celebrated for his skill through all the East. He had just attained the meridian of life; his person was graceful, and his manner soft and insinuating. Among many others, by whom Almerine had been taught to investigate nature, Nourassin had acquainted her with the qualities of trees and herbs. Of him she learned, how an innumerable progeny are contained in the parent plant; how they expand and quicken by degrees; how from the same soil each imbibes a different juice, which rising from the root hardens into branches above, swells into leaves, and flowers, and fruits, infinitely various in colour and taste, and smell: of power to repel diseases, or precipitate the stroke of death.

Whether by the caprice which is common to violent passions, or whether by some potion which Nourassin found means to administer to his scholar, is not known; but of Nourassin she became enamoured to the most romantic excess. The pleasure with which she had before reflected on the decree of the Fairy, 'that she should be sought in marriage by a sovereign prince,' was now at an end

It was the custom of the nobles to present their daughters to the king, when they entered their eighteenth year; an event which Almerine had often anticipated with impatience and hope, but now wished to prevent with solicitude and terror. The period, urged forward, like every thing future, with silent and irresistible rapidity, at length arrived. The curiosity of Soliman had been raised, as well by accidental encomiums, as by the artifices of Omaraddin, who now hasted to gratify it with the utmost anxiety and perturbation: he discovered the confusion of his daughter, and imagined that it was produced like his own, by the uncertainty and importance of an event, which would be determined before the day should be passed. He endeavoured to give her a peaceful confidence in the promise of the Fairy, which he wanted himself; and perceived, with regret, that her distress rather increased than diminished: this incident, however, as he had no suspicion of the cause, only rendered him more impatient of delay; and Almerine, covered with ornaments by which art and nature were exhausted, was, however reluctant, introduced to the king.

Soliman was now in his thirtieth year. He had sat ten years upon the throne, and for the steadiness of his virtue had been surnamed the Just. He had hitherto considered the gratification of appetite as a low enjoyment, allotted to weakness and obscurity; and the exercise of heroic virtue, as the superior felicity of eminence and power. He had as yet taken no wife; nor had he immured in his palace a multitude of unhappy beauties, in whom desire had no choice, and affection no object, to be successively forsaken after unresisted violation, and at last sink into the grave without having answered any nobler purpose, than sometimes to have grati-

fied the caprice of a tyrant, whom they saw at no other season, and whose presence could raise no passion more remote from detestation than fear.

Such was Soliman; who, having gazed some moments upon Almerine with silent admiration, rose up, and turning to the princes who stood round him, 'To-morrow,' said he, 'I will grant the request which you have so often repeated, and place a beauty upon my throne, by whom I may transmit my dominion to posterity: to-morrow, the daughter of Omaraddin shall be my wife.'

The joy with which Omaraddin heard this declaration, was abated by the effect which it produced upon Almerine: who, after some ineffectual struggles with the passions which agitated her mind, threw herself into the arms of her women, and burst into tears. Soliman immediately dismissed his attendants; and taking her in his arms, inquired the cause of her distress: this, however, was a secret, which neither her pride nor her fear would suffer her to reveal. She continued silent and inconsolable; and Soliman, though he secretly suspected some other attachment, yet appeared to be satisfied with the suggestions of her father, that her emotion was only such as is common to the sex upon any great and unexpected event. He desisted from farther importunity, and commanded that her women should remove her to a private apartment of the palace, and that she should be attended by his physician Nourassin.

N° 104. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1753.

Semita certe
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ. JUV.

But only virtue shews the paths of peace.

NOURASSIN, who had already learned what had happened, found his despair relieved by this opportunity of another interview. The lovers, however, were restrained from condolence and consultation, by the presence of the women, who could not be dismissed: but Nourassin put a small vial into the hand of Almerine as he departed, and told her, that it contained a cordial, which, if administered in time, would infallibly restore the chearfulness and vigour that she had lost. These words were heard by the attendants, though they were understood only by Almerine; she readily comprehended, that the potion she had received was poison, which would relieve her from languor and melancholy by removing the cause, if it could be given to the king before her marriage was completed. After Nourassin was gone, she sat ruminating on the infelicity of her situation, and the dreadful events of the morrow, till the night was far spent; and then, exhausted with perturbation and watching, she sunk down on the sofa, and fell into a deep sleep.

The king, whose rest had been interrupted by the effects which the beauty of Almerine had produced upon his mind, rose at the dawn of day; and send-

ing for her principal attendant who had been ordered to watch in her chamber, eagerly inquired what had been her behaviour, and whether she had recovered from her surprise. He was acquainted, that she had lately fallen asleep; and that a cordial had been left by Nourassin, which he affirmed would, if not too long delayed, suddenly recover her from languor and dejection, and which, notwithstanding, she had neglected to take. Soliman derived new hopes from this intelligence; and that she might meet him at the hour of marriage, with the chearful vivacity which the cordial of Nourassin would inspire, he ordered that it should, without asking her any question, be mixed with whatever she first drank in the morning.

Almerine, in whose blood the long-continued tumult of her miad had produced a feverish heat, awaked parched with thirst, and called eagerly for sherbet: her attendant, having first emptied the vial into the bowl, as she had been commanded by the king, presented it to her, and she drank it off. As soon as she had recollected the horrid business of the day, she missed the vial, and in a few moments she learned how it had been applied. The sudden terror which now seized her, hastened the effect of the poison: and she felt already the fire kindled in her veins, by which in a few hours she would be destroyed. Her disorder was now apparent, though the cause was not suspected: Nourassin was again introduced, and acquainted with the mistake; an antidote was immediately prepared and administered; and Almerine waited the event in agonies of body and mind, which are not to be described. The internal commotion every instant increased; sudden and intolerable heat and cold succeeded each other; and in less than an hour, she was covered with a leprosy; her hair fell, her head swelled, and every feature in

her countenance was distorted. Nourassin, who was doubtful of the event, had withdrawn to conceal his confusion; and Almerine, not knowing that these dreadful appearances were the presages of recovery, and shewed that the fatal effects of the poison were expelled from the citadel of life, conceived her dissolution to be near, and in the agony of remorse and terror earnestly requested to see the king. Soliman hastily entered her apartment, and beheld the ruins of her beauty with astonishment, which every moment increased, while she discovered the mischief which had been intended against him, and which had now fallen upon her own head.

Soliman, after he had recovered from his astonishment, retired to his own apartment; and in this interval of recollection he soon discovered that the desire of beauty had seduced him from the path of justice, and that he ought to have dismissed the person whose affections he believed to have another object. He did not, therefore, take away the life of Nourassin for a crime, to which he himself had furnished the temptation; but as some punishment was necessary as a sanction to the laws, he condemned him to perpetual banishment. He commanded that Almerine should be sent back to her father, that her life might be a memorial of his folly; and he determined, if possible, to atone by a second marriage for the errors of the first. He considered how he might inforce and illustrate some general precept; which would contribute more to the felicity of his people, than his leaving them a sovereign of his own blood; and at length he determined to publish this proclamation, throughout all the provinces of his empire; 'Soliman, whose judgment has been perverted, and whose life endangered, by the influence and the treachery of unrivalled beauty, is now resolved to place equal deformity upon his throne; that, when this event is re-

corded, the world may know, that by Vice beauty became yet more odious than ugliness; and learn, like Soliman, to despise that excellence, which, without virtue, is only a specious evil, the reproach of the possessor, and the snare of others.'

Shelimah, during these events, experienced a very different fortune. She remained, till she was thirteen years of age, in the castle; and it happened that, about this time, the person to whose care she had been committed, after a short sickness died. Shelimah imagined that she slept; but perceiving that all attempts to awaken her were ineffectual, and her stock of provisions being exhausted, she found means to open the wicket, and wander alone into the wood. She satisfied her hunger with such berries and wild fruits as she found, and at night, not being able to find her way back, she lay down under a thicket and slept. Here she was awaked early in the morning by a peasant, whose compassion happened to be proof against deformity. The man asked her many questions; but her answers rather increasing than gratifying his curiosity, he set her before him on his beast, and carried her to his house in the next village, at the distance of about six leagues. In his family she was the jest of some, and the pity of others; she was employed in the meanest offices, and her figure procured her the name of Goblin. But amidst all the disadvantages of her situation, she enjoyed the utmost felicity of food and rest; as she formed no wishes, she suffered no disappointment; her body was healthful, and her mind at peace.

In this station she had continued four years, when the heralds appeared in the village with the proclamation of Soliman. Shelimah ran out with others to gaze at the parade; she listened to the proclamation with great attention, and when it was ended, she perceived that the eyes of the multitude were fixed

upon her. One of the horsemen at the same time alighted, and with great ceremony entreated her to enter a chariot which was in the retinue, telling her, that she was without doubt the person whom Nature and Soliman had destined to be their queen. Shelimah replied with a smile, that she had no desire to be great; 'but,' said she, 'if your proclamation be true, I should rejoice to be the instrument of such admonition to mankind; and, upon this condition, I wish that I were indeed the most deformed of my species.' The moment this wish was uttered, the spell of Farimina produced the contrary effect; her skin, which was scaly and yellow, became smooth and white, her stature was perceived gradually to increase, her neck rose like a pillar of ivory, her bosom expanded, and her waist became less; her hair, which before was thin and of a dirty red, was now black as the feathers of the raven, and flowed in large ringlets on her shoulders; the most exquisite sensibility now sparkled in her eyes, her cheeks were tinged with the blushes of the morning, and her lips moistened with the dew; every limb was perfect, and every motion was graceful. A white robe was thrown over her by an invisible hand; the crowd fell back in astonishment, and gazed with insatiable curiosity upon such beauty as before they had never seen. Shelimah was not less astonished than the crowd: she stood awhile with her eyes fixed upon the ground; and finding her confusion increase, would have retired in silence; but she was prevented by the heralds, who having with much importunity prevailed upon her to enter the chariot, returned with her to the metropolis, presented her to Soliman, and related the prodigy.

Soliman looked round upon the assembly, in doubt whether to prosecute or relinquish his purpose; when Abbaran, a hoary sage, who had presided in the

council of his father, came forward, and placing his forehead on the footstool of the throne; 'Let the King,' said he, 'accept the reward of virtue, and take Shelimah to his bed. In what age, and in what nation, shall not the beauty of Shelimah be honoured? to whom will it be transmitted alone? Will not the story of the wife of Soliman descend with her name? will it not be known, that thy desire of beauty was not gratified, till it had been subdued? that by an iniquitous purpose beauty became hideous, and by a virtuous wish deformity became fair?'

Soliman, who had fixed his eyes upon Shelimah, discovered a mixture of joy and confusion in her countenance, which determined his choice, and was an earnest of his felicity; for at that moment, Love, who, during her state of deformity, had been excluded by the fairy Elfarina's interdiction, took possession of her breast.

The nuptial ceremony was not long delayed, and Elfarina honoured it with her presence. When she departed, she bestowed on both her benediction; and put into the hand of Shelimah a scroll of vellum, on which was this inscription in letters of gold:

'Remember, Shelimah, the fate of Almerine, who still lives the reproach of parental folly, of degraded beauty, and perverted sense. Remember Almerine; and let her example and thy own experience teach thee, that wit and beauty, learning, affluence, and honour, are not essential to human felicity; with these she was wretched, and without them thou wast happy. The advantages which I have hitherto bestowed, must now be obtained by an effort of thy own: that which gives relish to the coarsest food, is Temperance; the apparel and the dwelling of a peasant and a prince, are equal in the estimation of Humility; and the torment of ineffec-

tual desires is prevented, by the resignation of Piety to the will of Heaven; advantages which are in the power of every wretch, who repines at the unequal distribution of good and evil, and imputes to Nature the effects of his own folly.'

The King, to whom Shelimah communicated these precepts of the Fairy, caused them to be transcribed, and with an account of the events which had produced them, distributed over all his dominions. Precepts which were thus enforced, had an immediate and extensive influence; and the happiness of Soliman and of Shelimah was thus communicated to the multitudes whom they governed.

N° 105. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1753.

Novam comicam Menandrus, *æqualesque ejus ætatis magis quam æperis, Philemon ac Diphilus, & invenere intra paucissimos annos, neque imitandam reliquere.* VELL. PATERCUL.

Menander, together with Philemon and Diphilus, who must be named with him rather as his contemporaries than his equals, invented within the compass of a few years a new kind of comedy, and left it beyond the reach of imitation.

TO THE ADVENTURER,

SIR,

MORALITY, taste, and literature, scarcely ever suffered more irreparably, than by the loss of the comedies of Menander; some of whose fragments, agreeable to my promise, I am now going to lay before you; which I should imagine would be as highly prized by the curious, as was the Coan Venus which Apelles left imperfect and unfinished.

Menander was celebrated for the sweetness, brevity, and sententiousness of his style. 'He was fond of Euripides,' says Quintilian, 'and nearly imitated the manner of this tragic writer, though in a different kind of work. He is a complete pattern of oratorial excellence; ità omnem vitæ imaginem expressit, tanta in eo inveniendi copia, & eloquendi facultas; ità est omnibus rebus, personis, affectibus, accommodatus; so various and so just,

are all his pictures of life; so copious is his invention, so masterly his elocution; so wonderfully is he adapted to all kinds of subjects, persons, and passions.' This panegyric reflects equal honour on the critic, and on the comedian. Quintilian has here painted Menander with as lively and expressive strokes, as Menander had characterised the Athenians.

Boileau, in his celebrated eighth satire, has not represented the misery and folly of man, so forcibly or humourously as Menander.

"Απαντα τα ζωα ἐστι μακαριωτερα,
Και νουν ἐχοντα μαλλον ανθρωπου πολυ.
Τον ονον οραν ἐξεστι πρωτα τουτονι,
Ουτος παιδαιμων ἐστιν ομολογουμενως.
Τουτω κακον δ' αυτον ουδεν γιγνεται,
Α δε φυσις διδωκεν αυτω ταυτ' ἐχει.
'Εμεις δε χωρις των αναγκαιων κακων,
Αυτοι πας' αυτων ετερα προσποριζομεν,
Λυπουμεθ', αν παρη τις αν τυχη κακος,
'Οργιζομεθ· αν ιδη τις ενυπνιον σφοδρα
Φοβουμεθ· αν γλαυξ ανακραγη δεδοικαμεν,
'Αγωνιαι, δοξαι, φιλοτιμιαι, νομοι,
Απαντα ταυτ' ἐπιθετα τη φυσει κακα.

'All animals are more happy, and have more understanding than man. Look, for instance, on yonder ass; all allow him to be miserable: his evils, however, are not brought on him by himself and his own fault: he feels only those which nature has inflicted. We, on the contrary, besides our necessary ills, draw upon ourselves a multitude of others. We are melancholy, if any person happen to sneeze; we are angry, if any speak reproachfully of us; one man is affrighted with an unlucky dream, another at the hooting of an owl. Our contentions, our anxieties, our opinions, our ambition, our laws, are all evils, which we ourselves have superadded to

nature.' Comparisons betwixt the conditions of the brutal and human species, have been frequently drawn; but this of Menander, as it probably was the first, so it is the best I have ever seen.

If this passage is admirable for the vivacity and severity of its satire, the following certainly deserves deeper attention for weight of sentiment, and sublimity and purity of moral.

Ει τις δε θυσιαν προσφερον ὦ Παμφιλε,
Ταυρων τε πληθος ἢ εριφων, ἢ, νη Δια,
Ἑτερων τοιουτων, ἢ κατασκευασματα
Χρυσας ποιησας χλαμυδος ητοι πορφυρας,
Ἢ δι' ελεφαντος, ἢ σμαραγδου ζωδια,
Ευνουν νομιζει τον Θεον καθισταναι,
Πλανατ' εκεινος, και φρενας κουφας εχει.
Δει γαρ τον ανδρα χρησιμον πεφυκεναι,
Μη παρθενους φθεροντα, μη μοιχωμενον,
Κλεπτοντα, και σφαττοντα χρηματων χαριν.
Μηδε βελονης εναμμ' επιθυμης Παμφιλε,
Ὁ γαρ Θεος βλεπει σε πλησιον παρων.

'He that offers in sacrifice, O Pamphilus, a multitude of bulls and of goats, of golden vestments, of purple garments, or figures of ivory, or precious gems; and imagines by this to conciliate the favour of God, is grossly mistaken, and has no solid understanding. For he that would sacrifice with success, ought to be chaste and charitable, no corrupter of virgins, no adulterer, no robber or murderer for the sake of lucre. Covet not, O Pamphilus, even the thread of another man's needle; for God, who is near thee, perpetually beholds thy actions.'

Temperance, and justice, and purity, are here inculcated in the strongest manner, and upon the most powerful motive, the Omniscience of the Deity; at the same time superstition and the idolatry of the heathen are artfully ridiculed. I know not among the ancients any passage that contains

such exalted and spiritualized thoughts of religion. Yet if these refined sentiments were to be inserted in a modern comedy, I fear they would be rejected with disdain and disapprobation. The Athenians could endure to hear God and Virtue mentioned in the theatre; while an English and a Christian audience can laugh at adultery as a jest, think obscenity wit, and debauchery amiable. The murderer, if a duellist, is a man of honour, the gamester understands the art of living, the knave has penetration and knows mankind, the spendthrift is a fellow of fine spirit, the rake has only robbed a fresh country girl of her innocence and honour; the jilt and the coquet have a great deal of vivacity and fire; but a faithful husband is a dupe and a cuckold, and a plain country gentleman a novice and a fool. The wretch that dared to ridicule Socrates abounds not in so much false satire, ribaldry, obscenity, and blasphemy, as our witty and wicked triumvirate, Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh.

Menander has another very remarkable reflection; worthy even that divine religion, which the last-mentioned writers so impotently endeavoured to deride. It relates to the forgiveness of enemies, a precept not totally unknown to the ancient sages, as hath rashly been affirmed; though never inculcated with such frequency, fervor and cogency, and on motives so weighty and efficacious, as by the founder of the Christian System.

Ουτος κρατιστος εστ' ανηρ ὠ Γοργια,
Ὅστις ἀδικεισθαι πλειστ' επισταται βροτων.

'He, O Gorgias, is the most virtuous man, who best knows among mortals how to bear injuries with patience.'

It may not be improper to alleviate the serious-

ness of these moral reflections, by the addition of a passage of a more light and sprightly turn.

Ὁ μεν Ἐπιχαρμος τους Θεους ειναι λεγει,
Ανεμους, υδωρ, γην, ηλιον, πυρ, αστερας·
Εγω δ' υπολαβον χρησιμους ειναι Θεους
Τ' αργυριον ημιν και το χρυσιον μονον.
Ιδουσαμενος τουτους, γαρ εις την οικιαν
Ευξει τι βουλει, παντα σοι γενησεται
Αγρος, οικιαι, θεραποντες, αργυρωματα,
Φιλοι, δικασται, μαρτυρες——

'Epicharmus, indeed, calls the winds, the water, the earth, the sun, the fire, and the stars, Gods. But I am of opinion that gold and silver are our only powerful and propitious deities. For when once you have introduced these into your house, wish for what you will, you shall quickly obtain it; an estate, a habitation, servants, plate, friends, judges, witnesses.'

From these short specimens, we may in some measure be enabled to judge of Menander's way of thinking and of writing; remembering always how much his elegance is injured by a plain prosaic translation, and by considering the passages singly and separately, without knowing the characters of the personages that spoke them, and the aptness and propriety with which they were introduced.

The delicacy and decorum observed constantly by Menander, rendered him the darling writer of the Athenians, at a time when the Athenians were arrived at the height of prosperity and politeness, and could no longer relish the coarse railleries, the brutal mirth, and illiberal wit, of an indecent Aristophanes. 'Menander,' says Plutarch, 'abounds in a precious Attic salt, which seems to have been taken from the same sea, whence Venus herself arose. But the salt of Aristophanes is bitter, disgusting, and corrosive.'

There are two circumstances that may justly give us a mean opinion of the taste of the Romans for comic entertainments: that in the Augustan age itself, notwithstanding the censure of Horace, they preferred the low buffoonery and drollery of Plautus to the delicacy and civility of Terence, the faithful copier of Menander: and that Terence, to gratify an audience unacquainted with the real excellencies of the drama, found himself obliged to violate the simplicity of Menander's plots, and work up two stories into one in each of his comedies, except the excellent and exact Hecyra. But this duplicity of fable abounding in various turns of fortune, necessarily draws off the attention from what ought to be its chief object in a legitimate comedy, Character and Humour.

Z I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

PALÆOPHILUS.

N° 106. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1753.

Quo moriture ruis?— VIRG.

Why wilt thou rush to Death?— DRYDEN.

I HAVE before remarked, that human wit has never been able to render courage contemptible by ridicule: though courage, as it is sometimes a proof of exalted virtue, is also frequently an indication of enormous vice; for if he who effects a good purpose at the risk of life, is allowed to have the

strongest propensity to good, it must be granted, that he who at the risk of life effects an evil purpose, has an equal propensity to evil. But as ridicule has not distinguished courage into virtue and vice, neither has it yet distinguished insensibility from courage.

Every passion becomes weak in proportion as it is familiar with its object. Evil must be considered as the object of fear; but the passion is excited only when the evil becomes probable, or in other words, when we are in danger. As the same evil may become probable many ways, there are several species of danger: that danger to which men are continually exposed, soon becomes familiar, and fear is no longer excited. This, however, must not be considered as an example of courage; for equal danger, of any other kind, will still produce the same degree of fear in the same mind.

Mechanical causes, therefore, may produce insensibility of danger; but it is absurd to suppose they can produce courage, for courage is an effort of the mind by which a sense of danger is surmounted; and it cannot be said, without the utmost perversion of language, that a man is courageous, merely because he discovers no fear when he is sensible of no danger.

It is indeed true, that insensibility and courage produce the same effect; and when we see another unconcerned and chearful in a situation which would make us tremble, it is not strange that we should impute his tranquillity to the strength of his mind, and honour his want of fear with the name of courage. And yet when a mason whistles at his work on a plank of a foot broad and an inch thick, which is suspended by a rafter and a cord over a precipice, from which if he should fall he would inevitably perish, he is only reconciled by habit to a

situation, in which more danger is generally apprehended than exists; he has acquired no strength of mind, by which a sense of danger is surmounted; nor has he with respect to courage any advantage over him who, though he would tremble on the scaffold, would yet stand under it without apprehension; for the danger in both situations is nearly equal, and depends upon the same incidents.

But the same insensibility is often substituted for courage by habit, even when the danger is real, and in those minds which every other occasion would shew to be destitute of fortitude. The inhabitants of Sicily live without terror upon the declivity of a volcano, which the stranger ascends with an interrupted pace, looking round at every step, doubting whether to go forward or retire, and dreading the caprice of the flames which he hears roar beneath him, and sees issue at the summit: but let a woman, who is thus become insensible to the terrors of an earthquake, be carried to the mouth of the mines in Sweden, she will look down into the abyss with terror, she will shudder at the thought of descending it, and tremble lest the brink should give way.

Against insensibility of real danger we should not be less watchful than against unreasonable fear. Fear, when it is justly proportioned to its object, and not too strong to be governed by reason, is not only blameless but honourable; it is essential to the perfection of human nature, and the mind would be as defective without it as the body without a limb. Man is a being exposed to perpetual evil; every moment liable to destruction by innumerable accidents, which yet, if he foresees, he cannot frequently prevent: fear, therefore, was implanted in his breast for his preservation; to warn him when

danger approaches, and to prevent his being precipitated upon it either by wantonness or inattention. But those evils which, without fear, we should not have foreseen, when fear becomes excessive we are unable to shun; for cowardice and presumption are equally fatal, and are frequently found in the same mind.

A peasant in the north of England had two sons, Thomas and John. Tom was taken to sea when he was very young, by the master of a small vessel who lived at Hull; and Jack continued to work with his father till he was near thirty. Tom, who was now become master of a smack himself, took his brother on board for London, and promised to procure him some employment among the shipping on the waterside. After they had been some hours under sail, the wind became contrary, and blew very fresh; the waves began immediately to swell, dashing with violence against the prow, whitened into foam. The vessel, which now plied to windward, lay so much on one side, that the edge was frequently under water; and Jack, who expected it to overset every moment, was seized with terror which he could not conceal. He earnestly requested of Tom that the sails might be taken in; and lamented the folly that had exposed him to the violence of a tempest, from which he could not without a miracle escape. Tom, with a sovereign contempt of his pusillanimity, derided his distress; and Jack, on the contrary, admired the bravery of Tom and his crew, from whose countenances and behaviour he at length derived some hope; he believed he had deserved the reproach which he suffered, and despised himself for the fear which he could not shake off. In the mean time the gale increased, and in less than an hour it blew a storm. Jack, who watched every countenance with the ut-

most attention and solicitude, thought that his fears were now justified by the looks of the sailors; he, therefore, renewed his complaint, and perceiving his brother still unconcerned, again intreated him to take every possible precaution, and not increase their danger by presumption. In answer to these remonstrances he received such consolation as one lord of the creation frequently administers to another in the depth of distress; 'Pshaw, damme, you fool,' says Tom, 'don't be dead-h arted; the more sail we carry, the sooner we shall be out of the weather.' Jack's fear had, indeed, been alarmed before he was in danger: but Tom was insensible of the danger when it arrived: he, therefore, continued his course, exulting in the superiority of his courage, and anticipating the triumph of his vanity when they should come on shore. But the sails being still spread, a sudden gust bore away the mast, which in its fall so much injured the helm, that it became impossible to steer, and in a very short time afterwards the vessel struck. The first moment in which Tom became sensible of danger, he was seen to be totally destitute of courage. When the vessel struck, Jack, who had been ordered under hatches, came up, and found the hero, whom he had so lately regarded with humility and admiration, sitting on the quarter-deck wringing his hands, and uttering incoherent and clamorous exclamations. Jack now appeared more calm than before, and asked, if any thing could yet be done to save their lives. Tom replied, in a frantic tone, that they might possibly float to land on some parts of the wreck; and catching up an axe, instead of attempting to disengage the mast, he began to stave the boat. Jack, whose reason was still predominant, though he had been afraid too soon, saw that Tom in his frenzy was about to cut off their last

hope; he, therefore, caught hold of his arm, took away the axe by force, assisted the sailors in getting the boat into the water, persuaded his brother to quit the vessel, and in about four hours they got safe on shore.

If the vessel had weathered the storm, Tom would have been deemed a hero, and Jack a coward: but I hope that none, whom I have led into this train of thought, will, for the future, regard insensibility of danger as an indication of courage: or impute cowardice to those whose fear is not inadequate to its object, or too violent to answer its purpose.

There is one evil, of which multitudes are in perpetual danger: an evil, to which every other is as the drop of the bucket, and the dust of the balance; and yet of this danger the greater part appear to be totally insensible.

Every man who wastes in negligence the day of salvation, stands on the brink not only of the grave but of hell. That the danger of all is imminent, appears by the terms that Infinite Wisdom has chosen to express the conduct by which alone it can be escaped; it is called, 'a race, a watch, a work to be wrought with fear and trembling, a strife unto blood, and a combat with whatever can seduce or terrify, with the pleasures of sense and the power of angels.' The moment in which we shall be snatched from the brink of this gulph, or plunged to the bottom, no power can either avert or retard; it approaches silent, indeed, as the flight of time, but rapid and irresistible as the course of a comet. That dreadful evil, which, with equal force and propriety, is called the Second Death, should not, surely, be disregarded, merely because it has been long impending: and as there is no equivalent for which a man can reasonably determine to suffer

it, it cannot be considered as the object of courage. How it may be borne, should not be the inquiry, but how it may be shunned. And if in this daring age it is impossible to prepare for eternity, without giving up the character of a hero, no reasonable beings surely, will be deterred by this consideration from the attempt; for who but an infant, or an idiot, would give up his paternal inheritance for a feather, or renounce the acclamations of a triumph for the tinkling of a rattle?

N° 107. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1753.

——*Sub judice lis est.* HOR.

And of their vain disputings find no end. FRANCIS.

It has been sometimes asked by those, who find the appearance of wisdom more easily attained by questions than solutions, how it comes to pass, that the world is divided by such difference of opinion; and why men, equally reasonable, and equally lovers of truth, do not always think in the same manner?

With regard to simple propositions, where the terms are understood, and the whole subject is comprehended at once, there is such an uniformity of sentiment among all human beings, that, for many ages, a very numerous set of notions were supposed to be innate, or necessarily co-existent with the faculty of reason: it being imagined, that

universal agreement could proceed only from the invariable dictates of the universal parent.

In questions diffuse and compounded, this similarity of determination is no longer to be expected. At our first sally into the intellectual world, we all march together along one straight and open road; but as we proceed further, and wider prospects open to our view, every eye fixes upon a different scene; we divide into various paths, and, as we move forward, are still at a greater distance from each other. As a question becomes more complicated and involved, and extends to a greater number of relations, disagreement of opinion will always be multiplied; not because we are irrational, but because we are finite beings, furnished with different kinds of knowledge, exerting different degrees of attention, one discovering consequences which escape another, none taking in the whole concatenation of causes and effects, and most comprehending but a very small part, each comparing what he observes with a different criterion, and each referring it to a different purpose.

Where, then, is the wonder, that they who see only a small part, should judge erroneously of the whole? or that they, who see different and dissimilar parts, should judge differently from each other?

'Whatever has various respects, must have various appearances of good and evil, beauty or deformity; thus, the gardener tears up as a weed, the plant which the physician gathers as a medicine; and 'a general,' says Sir Kenelm Digby, 'will look with pleasure over a plain, as a fit place on which the fate of empires might be decided in battle, which the farmer will despise as bleak and barren, neither fruitful of pasturage, nor fit for tillage.'

Two men examining the same question proceed commonly like the physicians and gardener in selecting herbs, or the farmer and hers looking on the plain; they bring minds impressed with different notions, and direct their inquiries to different ends; they form, therefore, contrary conclusions, and each wonders at the other's absurdity.

We have less reason to be surprised or offended when we find others differ from us in opinion, because we very often differ from ourselves. How often we alter our minds, we do not always remark; because the change is sometimes made imperceptibly and gradually, and the last conviction effaces all memory of the former: yet every man, accustomed from time to time to take a survey of his own notions, will by a slight retrospection be able to discover, that his mind has suffered many revolutions; that the same things have in the several parts of his life been condemned and approved, pursued and shunned; and that on many occasions, even when his practice has been steady, his mind has been wavering, and he has persisted in a scheme of action, rather because he feared the censure of inconstancy, than because he was always pleased with his own choice.

Of the different faces shewn by the same objects as they are viewed on opposite sides, and of the different inclinations which they must constantly raise in him that contemplates them, a more striking example cannot easily be found than two Greek epigrammatists will afford us in their accounts of human life, which I shall lay before the reader in English prose.

Posidippus, a comic poet, utters this complaint; 'Through which of the paths of life is it eligible to pass? In public assemblies are debates and troublesome affairs: domestic privacies are haunted with

anxieties; in the country is labour; on the sea is terror: in a foreign land, he that has money must live in fear, he that wants it must pine in distress: are you married? you are troubled with suspicions; are you single? you languish in solitude; children occasion toil, and a childless life is a state of destitution; the time of youth is a time of folly, and grey hairs are loaded with infirmity. This choice only, therefore, can be made, either never to receive being or immediately to lose it.'

Such and so gloomy is the prospect, which Posidippus has laid before us. But we are not to acquiesce too hastily in his determination against the value of existence: for Metrodorus, a philosopher of Athens, has shewn, that life has pleasures as well as pains; and having exhibited the present state of man in brighter colours, draws, with equal appearance of reason, a contrary conclusion.

'You may pass well through any of the paths of life. In public assemblies are honours and transactions of wisdom; in domestic privacy, is stillness and quiet: in the country are the beauties of nature; on the sea is the hope of gain; in a foreign land, he that is rich is honoured, he that is poor may keep his poverty secret: are you married? you have a cheerful house; are you single? you are unincumbered; children are objects of affection, to be without children is to be without care; the time of youth is the time of vigour, and grey hairs are made venerable by piety. It will, therefore, never be a wise man's choice, either not to obtain existence, or to lose it; for every state of life has its felicity.'

In these epigrams are included most of the questions which have engaged the speculations of the inquirers after happiness; and though they will not much assist our determinations, they may, perhaps,

equally promote our quiet, by shewing that no absolute determination ever can be formed.

Whether a public station, or private life be desirable, has always been debated. We see here both the allurements and discouragements of civil employments: on one side there is trouble, on the other honour; the management of affairs is vexatious and difficult, but it is the only duty in which wisdom can be conspicuously displayed: it must then still be left to every man to choose either ease or glory; nor can any general precept be given, since no man can be happy by the prescription of another.

Thus, what is said of children by Posidippus, 'that they are occasions of fatigue,' and by Metrodorus, 'that they are objects of affection,' is equally certain; but whether they will give most pain or pleasure, must depend on their future conduct and dispositions, on many causes over which the parent can have little influence: there is, therefore, room for all the caprices of imagination, and desire must be proportioned to the hope or fear that shall happen to predominate.

Such is the uncertainty in which we are always likely to remain with regard to questions, wherein we have most interest, and which every day affords us fresh opportunity to examine; we may examine, indeed, but we never can decide, because our faculties are unequal to the subject: we see a little, and form an opinion; we see more, and change it.

This inconstancy and unsteadiness, to which we must so often find ourselves liable, ought certainly to teach us moderation and forbearance towards those who cannot accommodate themselves to our sentiments: if they are deceived, we have no right to attribute their mistake to obstinacy or negligence, because we likewise have been mistaken;

we may, perhaps, again change our own opinion; and what excuse shall we be able to find for aversion and malignity conceived against him, whom we shall then find to have committed no fault, and who offended us only by refusing to follow us into error?

It may likewise contribute to soften that resentment which pride naturally raises against opposition, if we consider, that he who differs from us, does not always contradict us; he has one view of an object, and we have another; each describes what he sees with equal fidelity, and each regulates his steps by his own eyes: one man, with Posidippus, looks on celibacy as a state of gloomy solitude, without a partner in joy or a comforter in sorrow; the other considers it, with Metrodorus, as a state free from incumbrances, in which a man is at liberty to choose his own gratifications, to remove from place to place in quest of pleasure, and to think of nothing but merriment and diversion: full of these notions one hastens to choose a wife, and the other laughs at his rashness, or pities his ignorance; yet it is possible that each is right, but that each is right only for himself.

Life is not the object of science: we see a little, very little; and what is beyond we only can conjecture. If we inquire of those who have gone before us, we receive small satisfaction; some have travelled life without observation, and some willingly mislead us. The only thought, therefore, on which we can repose with comfort, is that which presents to us the care of Providence, whose eye takes in the whole of things, and under whose direction all involuntary errors will terminate in happiness.

T

N° 108. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1753.

Nobis, cum simul occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda. CATULLUS.

When once the short-lived mortal dies,
A night eternal seals his eyes. ADDISON.

It may have been observed by every reader, that there are certain topics which never are exhausted. Of some images and sentiments the mind of man may be said to be enamoured; it meets them, however often they occur, with the same ardour which a lover feels at the sight of his mistress, and parts from them with the same regret when they can no longer be enjoyed.

Of this kind are many descriptions which the poets have transcribed from each other, and their successors will probably copy to the end of time; which will continue to engage, or, as the French term it, to flatter the imagination, as long as human nature shall remain the same.

When a poet mentions the spring, we know that the zephyrs are about to whisper, that the groves are to recover their verdure, the linnets to warble forth their notes of love, and the flocks and herds to frisk over vales painted with flowers: yet, who is there so insensible of the beauties of nature, so little delighted with the renovation of the world, as not to feel his heart bound at the mention of the spring?

When night overshadows a romantic scene, all is stillness, silence, and quiet; the poets of the grove cease their melody, the moon towers over the world in gentle majesty, men forget their labours and their cares, and every passion and pursuit is for a while suspended. All this we know already, yet we hear it repeated without weariness; because such is generally the life of man, that he is pleased to think on the time when he shall pause from a sense of his condition.

When a poetical grove invites us to its covert, we know that we shall find what we have already seen, a limpid brook murmuring over pebbles, a bank diversified with flowers, a green arch that excludes the sun, and a natural grot shaded with myrtles; yet who can forbear to enter the pleasing gloom, to enjoy coolness and privacy, and gratify himself once more by scenes with which nature has formed him to be delighted?

Many moral sentiments likewise are so adapted to our state, that they find approbation whenever they solicit it, and are seldom read without exciting a gentle emotion in the mind: such is the comparison of the life of man with the duration of a flower, a thought which, perhaps, every nation has heard warbled in its own language, from the Inspired Poets of the Hebrews to our own times: yet this comparison must always please, because every heart feels its justness, and every hour confirms it by example.

Such, likewise, is the precept that directs us to use the present hour, and refer nothing to a distant time, which we are uncertain whether we shall reach: this every moralist may venture to inculcate, because it will always be approved, and because it is always forgotten.

This rule, is, indeed, every day enforced, by arguments more powerful than the dissertations of

moralists: we see men pleasing themselves with future happiness, fixing a certain hour for the completion of their wishes, and perishing some at a greater and some at a less distance from the happy time; all complaining of their disappointments, and lamenting that they had suffered the years which Heaven allowed them, to pass without improvement, and deferred the principal purpose of their lives to the time when life itself was to forsake them.

It is not only uncertain, whether, through all the casualties and dangers which beset the life of man, we shall be able to reach the time appointed for happiness or wisdom; but it is likely, that whatever now hinders us from doing that which our reason and conscience declared necessary to be done, will equally obstruct us in times to come. It is easy for the imagination, operating on things not yet existing, to please itself with scenes of unmingled felicity, or plan out courses of uniform virtue: but good and evil are in real life inseparably united; habits grow stronger by indulgence; and reason loses her dignity, in proportion as she has oftener yielded to temptation: 'he that cannot live well to-day,' says Martial, 'will be less qualified to live well to-morrow.'

Of the uncertainty of every human good, every human being seems to be convinced; yet this uncertainty is voluntarily increased by unnecessary delay, whether we respect external causes, or consider the nature of our own minds. He that now feels a desire to do right, and wishes to regulate his life according to his reason, is not sure that, at any future time assignable, he shall be able to rekindle the same ardour; he that has now an opportunity offered him of breaking loose from vice

illy, cannot know, but that he shall hereafter

be more entangled, and struggle for freedom without obtaining it.

We are so unwilling to believe any thing to our own disadvantage, that we will always imagine the perspicacity of our judgment and the strength of our resolution more likely to increase than to grow less by time; and, therefore, conclude, that the will to pursue laudable purposes will be always seconded by the power.

But however we may be deceived in calculating the strength of our faculties, we cannot doubt the uncertainty of that life in which they must be employed: we see every day the unexpected death of our friends and our enemies, we see new graves hourly opened for men older and younger than ourselves, for the cautious and the careless, the dissolute and the temperate, for men who like us were providing to enjoy or improve hours now irreversibly cut off; we see all this, and yet, instead of living, let year glide after year in preparations to live.

Men are so frequently cut off in the midst of their projections, that sudden death causes little emotion in them that behold it, unless it be impressed upon the attention by uncommon circumstances. I, like every other man, have outlived multitudes, have seen ambition sink in its triumphs, and beauty perish in its bloom; but have been seldom so much affected as by the fate of Euryalus, whom I lately lost as I began to love him.

Euryalus had for some time flourished in a lucrative profession; but having suffered his imagination to be fired by an unextinguishable curiosity, he grew weary of the same dull round of life, resolved to harass himself no longer with the drudgery of getting money, but to quit his business and his profits, and enjoy for a few years the pleasures of travel. His friends heard him proclaim his resolution,

without suspecting that he intended to pursue it; but he was constant to his purpose, and with great expedition closed his accounts and sold his moveables, passed a few days in bidding farewel to his companions, and with all the eagerness of romantic chivalry crossed the sea in search of happiness. Whatever place was renowned in ancient or modern history, whatever region art or nature had distinguished, he determined to visit: full of design and hope he landed on the continent; his friends expected accounts from him of the new scenes that opened in his progress, but were informed in a few days that Euryalus was dead.

Such was the end of Euryalus. He is entered that state, whence none ever shall return; and can now only benefit his friends, by remaining in their memories a permanent and efficacious instance of the blindness of desire, and the uncertainty of all terrestrial good. But, perhaps, every man has like me lost an Euryalus, has known a friend die with happiness in his grasp; and yet every man continues to think himself secure of life, and defers to some future time of leisure what he knows it will be fatal to have finally omitted.

It is, indeed, with this as with other frailties inherent in our nature; the desire of deferring to another time, what cannot be done without endurance of some pain, or forbearance of some pleasure, will, perhaps, never be totally overcome or suppressed; there will always be something that we shall wish to have finished, and be nevertheless unwilling to begin: but against this unwillingness it is our duty to struggle, and every conquest over our passions will make way for an easier conquest; custom is equally forcible to bad and good; nature will always be at variance with reason, but will rebel more feebly as she is oftener subdued.

The common neglect of the present hour is more shameful and criminal, as no man is betrayed to it by error, but admits it by negligence. Of the instability of life, the weakest understanding never thinks wrong, though the strongest often omits to think justly: reason and experience are always ready to inform us of our real state; but we refuse to listen to their suggestions, because we feel our hearts unwilling to obey them: but, surely, nothing is more unworthy of a reasonable being, than to shut his eyes, when he sees the road which he is commanded to travel, that he may deviate with fewer reproaches from himself; nor could any motive to tenderness, except the consciousness that we have all been guilty of the same fault, dispose us to pity those who thus consign themselves to voluntary ruin.

T

N° 109. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1753.

Insanire putas solemnia me, neque rides. HOR.

You think me but as mad as all mankind.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

MONTESQUIEU wittily observes, that by building professed mad-houses, men tacitly insinuate, that all who are out of their senses are to be found only in those places. This remark having made some

impression on my mind, produced last night the following vision.

I imagined that Bedlam had been ordered to be rebuilt upon a more extensive plan by act of parliament; and that Dean Swift, calling at my lodgings, offered to accompany me to see the new-erected edifice, which, he observed, was not half capacious enough before to contain the various species of madness that are to be found in this kingdom. As we walked through the galleries, he gave me the following account of the several inhabitants.

The lady in the first apartment had prevailed upon her husband, a man of study and œconomy, to indulge her with a route twice a week at her own house. This soon multiplied her obligations to the company she kept, and in a fortnight she insisted upon two more. His lordship venturing to oppose her demand with steady resolution, but with equal tenderness, the lady complained, that the rights of quality and fortune were invaded, that her credit was lost with the fashionable world, and that ignorance and brutality had robbed her of the pleasures of a reasonable being, and rendered her the most unhappy wife in Great Britain. The cause of her complaints, however, still subsisted, and by perpetually brooding over it she at length turned her brain.

Next to her is a dramatic writer, whose comedy having been justly damned, he began to vent his spleen against the public, by weekly abuses of the present age; but as neither the play nor his defences of it were read, his indignation continually increased, till at length it terminated in madness.

He on the right hand is a philosopher, who has lost his reason in a fruitless attempt to discover the cause of electricity.

He on the left is a celebrated jockey of noble

birth, whose favourite mare, that had enjoyed three triumphs in former seasons, was distanced a few days ago at Newmarket.

Yonder meagre man has bewildered his understanding by closely studying the doctrine of chances, in order to qualify himself for a professorship which will be shortly established and amply endowed at an eminent chocolate-house, where lectures on this important subject are constantly to be read.

An unforeseen accident turned the head of the next unfortunate prisoner. She had for a long time passed for fifteen years younger than she was, and her lively behaviour and airy dress concurred to help forward the imposition; till one evening, being animated with an extraordinary flow of spirits, she danced out seven of her artificial teeth, which were immediately picked up, and delivered to her with great ceremony by her partner.

The merchant in the neighbouring cell had resolved to gain a plumb. He was possessed of seventy thousand pounds, and eagerly expected a ship that was to complete his wishes. But the ship was cast away in the channel, and the merchant is distracted for his loss.

That disconsolate lady had for many years assiduously attended an old gouty uncle, had assented to all his absurdities, and humoured all his foibles, in full expectation of being made his executrix; when happening one day to affirm that his gruel had sack enough in it, contrary to his opinion, he altered his will immediately, and left all to her brother; which affords her no consolation, for avarice is able to subdue the tenderness of nature.

Behold the beautiful and virtuous Theodora! Her fondness for an ungrateful husband was un-

paralleled. She detected him in the arms of a disagreeable and affected prostitute, and was driven to distraction.

Is my old friend the commentator here likewise? Alas! he has lost his wits in inquiring whether or no the ancients wore perukes? as did his neighbour Cynthio, by receiving a frown from his patron at the last levee.

The fat lady, upon whom you look so earnestly, is a grocer's wife in the city. Her disorder was occasioned by her seeing at court, last Twelfth night, the daughter of Mr. Alderman Squeeze, oil-man, in a sack far richer and more elegant than her own.

The next chamber contains an adventurer who purchased thirty tickets in the last lottery. As he was a person of a sanguine complexion and lively imagination, he was sure of gaining the ten thousand pounds by the number of his chances. He spent a month in surveying the counties that lie in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, before he could find out an agreeable site for the fine house he intended to build. He next fixed his eye on a most blooming and beautiful girl, whom he designed to honour as his bride. He bespoke a magnificent coach, and the ornaments of his harness were to be of his own invention. Mr. Degagee, the taylor, was ordered to send to Paris for the lace with which his wedding clothes were to be adorned. But in the midst of these preparations for prosperity, all his tickets were drawn blanks; and instead of his villa on the banks of the Thames, you now see him in these melancholy lodgings.

His neighbour in the next apartment was an honest footman, who was persuaded likewise to try his fortune in the same lottery: and who, obtaining a very large and unexpected sum, could not stand

the shock of such sudden good fortune, but grew mad with excess of joy.

You wonder to see that cell beautified with Chinese vases and urns. It is inhabited by that famous virtuoso lady Harriet Brittle, whose opinion was formerly decisive at all auctions, where she was usually appealed to about the genuineness of porcelain. She purchased, at an exorbitant price, a Mandarin, and a Jos, that were the envy of all the female connoisseurs, and were allowed to be inestimable. They were to be placed at the upper end of a little rock-work temple of Chinese architecture, in which neither propriety, proportion, nor true beauty, were considered, and were carefully packed up in different boxes; but the brutish waggoner happening to overturn his carriage, they were crushed to pieces. The poor lady's understanding could not survive so irreparable a loss; and her relations, to soothe her passion, have provided those Chelsea urns with which she has decorated her chamber, and which she believes to be the true Nanquin.

Yonder miserable youth, being engaged in a hot contention at a fashionable brothel about a celebrated courtezan, killed a sea officer with whose face he was not acquainted; but who proved upon inquiry to be his own brother, who had been ten years absent in the Indies.

Look attentively into the next cell; you will there discover a lady of great worth and fine accomplishments, whose father condemned her to the arms of a right honourable debauchee, when he knew she had fixed her affections irrevocably on another, who possessed an unincumbered estate, but wanted the ornament of a title. She submitted to the orders of a stern father with patience, obedience, and a breaking heart. Her husband treated her with that contempt which he thought due to a citizen's

daughter; and besides communicated to her an infamous distemper, which her natural modesty forbade her to discover in time; and the violent medicines which were afterwards administered to her by an unskilful surgeon, threw her into a delirious fever, from which she could never be recovered.

Here the Dean paused; and looking upon me with great earnestness, and grasping my hand closely, spoke with an emphasis that awakened me;—— 'Think me not so insensible a monster, as to deride the lamentable lot of the wretches we have now surveyed. If we laugh at the follies, let us at the same time pity the manifold miseries of man.'

Z I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

SOPHRON.

N° 110. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1753.

Mens immota manet, lachrymæ volvuntur inanes. VIRG.

Sighs, groans, and tears, proclaim his inward pains;
But the firm purpose of his heart remains. DRYDEN.

PITY has been generally considered as the passion of gentle, benevolent, and virtuous minds; although it is acknowledged to produce only such a participation of the calamity of others, as upon the whole is pleasing to ourselves.

As a tender participation of foreign distress, it has been urged to prove, that man is endowed with social affections, which, however forcible, are wholly disinterested; and as a pleasing sensation, it

has been deemed an example of unmixed selfishness and malignity. It has been resolved into that power of imagination, by which we apply the misfortunes of others to ourselves: we have been said to pity no longer than we fancy ourselves to suffer, and to be pleased only by reflecting that our sufferings are not real; thus indulging a dream of distress, from which we can awake whenever we please, to exult in our security, and enjoy the comparison of the fiction with truth.

I shall not perplex my readers with the subtilties of a debate, in which human nature has, with equal zeal and plausibility, been exalted and degraded. It is sufficient for my purpose to remark, that Pity is generally understood to be that passion, which is excited by the sufferings of persons with whom we have no tender connection, and with whose welfare the stronger passions have not united our felicity; for no man would call the anguish of a mother, whose infant was torn from her breast and left to be devoured in a desert, by the name of Pity; although the sentiment of a stranger, who should drop a silent tear at the relation, which yet might the next hour be forgotten, could not otherwise be justly denominated.

If Pity, therefore, is absorbed in another passion, when our love of those that suffer is strong: Pity is rather an evidence of the weakness than the strength of that general philanthropy, for which some have so eagerly contended, with which they have flattered the pride and veiled the vices of mankind, and which they have affirmed to be alone sufficient to recommend them to the favour of Heaven, to atone for the indulgence of every appetite and the neglect of every duty.

If human benevolence was absolutely pure and social, it would not be necessary to relate the re-

vages of a pestilence or a famine with minute and discriminating circumstances to rouze our sensibility: we should certainly deplore irremediable calamity, and participate temporary distress, without any mixture of delight: that deceitful sorrow, in which pleasure is so well known to be predominant, that invention has been busied for ages in contriving tales of fictitious sufferance for no other end than to excite it, would be changed into honest commiseration, in which pain would be unmixed, and which, therefore, we should wish to lose.

Soon after the fatal battle of Fontenoy, a young gentleman, who came over with the officer that brought the express, being expected at the house of a friend, a numerous company of gentlemen and ladies were assembled to hear an account of the action from an eye-witness.

The gentleman, as every man is flattered by commanding attention, was easily prevailed upon to gratify the company, as soon as they were seated, and the first ceremonies past. He described the march of many thousands of their countrymen into a field, where batteries had been concealed on each side, which in a moment strewed the ground with mangled limbs, and carcasses that almost floated in blood, and obstructed the path of those who followed to the slaughter. He related, how often the decreasing multitude returned to the mouth of the cannon; how suddenly they were rallied, and how suddenly broken; he repeated the list of officers who had fallen undistinguished in the carnage, men whose eminence rendered their names universally known, their influence extensive, and their attachments numerous; and he hinted the fatal effects which this defeat might produce to the nation, by turning the success of the war against us. But the company, however amused by the relation, appeared not to be affected by the

event: they were still attentive to every trifling punctilio of ceremony, usual among well-bred persons; they bowed with a graceful simper to a lady who sneezed, mutually presented each other with snuff, shook their heads and changed their posture at proper intervals, asked some questions which tended to produce a more minute detail of such circumstances of horror as had been lightly touched; and having at last remarked that the Roman patriot regretted the brave could die but once, the conversation soon became general, and a motion was made to divide into parties at whist. But just as they were about to comply, the gentleman again engaged their attention. 'I forgot,' said he, 'to relate one particular, which, however, deserves to be remembered. The captain of a company, whose name I cannot now recollect, had, just before his corps was ordered to embark, married a young lady to whom he had been long tenderly attached, and who, contrary to the advice of all her friends, and the expostulations, persuasion, and entreaty of her husband, insisted to go abroad with him, and share his fortune at all events. If he should be wounded, she said that she might hasten his recovery, and alleviate his pain, by such attendance as strangers cannot be hired to pay; if he should be taken prisoner, she might, perhaps, be permitted to shorten the tedious hours of captivity which solitude would protract; and if he should die, that it would be better for her to know it with certainty and speed, than to wait at a distance in anxiety and suspense, tormented by doubtful and contradictory reports, and at last believing it possible, that if she had been present, her assiduity and tenderness might have preserved his life. The captain, though he was not convinced by her reasoning, was yet overcome by the importunate eloquence of her love; he consented to her request, and they embarked together.

'The head-quarters of the Duke of Cumberland were at Bruffoel, from whence they removed the evening before the battle to Monbray, a village within musquet-shot of the enemy's lines, where the captain, who commanded in the left wing, was encamped.

'Their parting in the morning was short. She looked after him, till he could no longer be distinguished from others; and as soon as the firing began, she went back pale and trembling, and sat down expecting the event in an agony of impatience, anxiety and terror. She soon learned from stragglers and fugitives, that the slaughter was dreadful, and the victory hopeless. She did not, however, yet despair; she hoped, that the captain might return among the few that should remain: but soon after the retreat, this hope was cut off, and she was informed that he fell in the first charge, and was left among the dead. She was restrained by those about her from rushing in the phrenzy of desperation to the field of battle, of which the enemy was still possessed: but the tumult of her mind having abated, and her grief become more calm during the night, she ordered a servant to attend her at break of day; and as leave had been given to bury the dead, she went herself to seek the remains of her husband, that she might honour them with the last rites, and pour the tears of conjugal affection upon his grave. They wandered about among the dying and the dead, gazing on every distorted countenance, and looking round with irresolution and amazement on a scene, which those who stripped had left tenfold more a sight of horror than those who had slain. From this sight she was at last turning with confusion and despair; but was stopped by the cries of a favourite spaniel, who had followed her without being perceived. He was standing at some distance in the field; and the mo-

ment she saw him, she conceived the strongest assurance that he had found his master. She hasted instantly to the place, without regarding any other object; and stooping over the corpse by which he stood, she found it so disfigured with wounds and besmeared with blood that the features were not to be known: but as she was weeping in the anguish of suspence, she discovered hanging on the wrist the remains of a ruffle, round which there was a slight border of her own work. Thus suddenly to have discovered, and in such dreadful circumstances, that which she had sought, quite overwhelmed her, and she sunk down on the body. By the assistance of the servant she was recovered to sensibility, but not to reason; she was seized at once with convulsions and madness; and a few hours after she was carried back to the village she expired.'

Those, who had heard the fate of whole battalions without pity, and the loss of a battle, by which their country would probably suffer irreparable damage, without concern, listened to a tale of private distress with uninterrupted attention. All regard to each other was for a while suspended; tears by degrees overflowed every eye, and every bosom became susceptible of Pity: but the whole circle paused with evident regret, when the narrative was at an end; and would have been glad, that such another could have been told to continue their entertainment. Such was the Benevolence of Pity! But a lady who had taken the opportunity of a very slight acquaintance to satisfy her curiosity, was touched with much deeper distress; and fainting in the struggle to conceal the emotions of her mind, fell back in her chair: an accident which was not sooner discovered, because every eye had been fixed upon the speaker, and all attention monopolized by the story. Every one, however, was ready to afford her assistance; and if

was soon discovered, that she was mother to the lady whose distress had afforded so much virtuous pleasure to the company. It was not possible to tell her another story, which would revive the same sensations; and if it had, the world could not have bribed her to have heard it. Her affection to the sufferer was too strong to permit her, on this occasion, to enjoy the luxury of Pity, and applaud her benevolence for sensations which shewed its defects. It would, indeed, be happy for us, if we were to exist only in this state of imperfection, that a greater share of sensibility is not allowed us; but if the mole, in the kindness of Unerring Wisdom, is permitted scarce to distinguish light from darkness, the mole should not, surely, be praised for the perspicacity of its sight.

Let us distinguish that malignity, which others confound with Benevolence, and applaud as virtue; let that imperfection of nature, which is adapted to an imperfect state, teach us humility; and fix our dependence upon Him, who has promised to 'create in us a new heart and a right spirit;' and to receive us to that place, where our love of others, however ardent, can only increase our felicity; because in that place there will be no object, but such as Perfect Benevolence can contemplate with delight.

N° 111. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1753.

——Qua non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco. OVID.

The deeds of long descended ancestors
Are but by grace of imputation ours. DRYDEN.

THE evils inseparably annexed to the present condition of man, are so numerous and afflictive, that it has been, from age to age, the task of some to bewail, and of others to solace them; and he, therefore, will be in danger of seeming a common enemy, who shall attempt to depreciate the few pleasures and felicities which nature has allowed us.

Yet I will confess, that I have sometimes employed my thoughts in examining the pretensions that are made to happiness, by the splendid and envied condition of life; and have not thought the hour unprofitably spent, when I have detected the imposture of counterfeit advantages, and found disquiet lurking under false appearances of gaiety and greatness.

It is asserted by a tragic poet, that 'est miser nemo nisi comparatus,' 'no man is miserable, but as he is compared with others happier than himself:' this position is not strictly and philosophically true.

He might have said, with rigorous propriety, that no man is happy but as he is compared with the miserable; for such is the state of this world, that we find in it absolute misery, but happiness only

comparative; we may incur as much pain as we can possibly endure, though we can never obtain as much happiness as we might possibly enjoy.

Yet it is certain likewise, that many of our miseries are merely comparative: we are often made unhappy, not by the presence of any real evil, but by the absence of some fictitious good; of something which is not required by any real want of nature, which has not in itself any power of gratification, and which neither reason nor fancy would have prompted us to wish, did we not see it in the possession of others.

For a mind diseased with vain longings after unattainable advantages, no medicine can be prescribed, but an impartial inquiry into the real worth of that which is so ardently desired. It is well known, how much the mind, as well as the eye, is deceived by distance; and, perhaps, it will be found, that of many imagined blessings it may be doubted, whether he that wants or possesses them has more reason to be satisfied with his lot.

The dignity of high birth and long extraction, no man, to whom nature has denied it, can confer upon himself; and, therefore, it deserves to be considered, whether the want of that which can never be gained, may not easily be endured. It is true, that if we consider the triumph and delight with which most of those recount their ancestors who have ancestors to recount, and the artifices by which some who have risen to unexpected fortune endeavour to insert themselves into an honourable stem, we shall be inclined to fancy that wisdom or virtue may be had by inheritance, or that all the excellencies of a line of progenitors are accumulated on their descendant. Reason, indeed, will soon inform us, that our estimation of birth is arbitrary and capricious, and that dead ancestors can have no influence but upon imagination;

let it then be examined, whether one dream may not operate in the place of another; whether he that owes nothing to forefathers, may not receive equal pleasure from the consciousness of owing all to himself: whether he may not, with a little meditation, find it more honourable to found than to continue a family, and to gain dignity than transmit it; whether, if he receives no dignity from the virtues of his family, he does not likewise escape the danger of being disgraced by their crimes; and whether he that brings a new name into the world, has not the convenience of playing the game of life without a stake, an opportunity of winning much though he has nothing to lose.

There is another opinion concerning happiness, which approaches much more nearly to universality, but which may, perhaps, with equal reason be disputed. The pretensions to ancestral honours many of the sons of earth easily see to be ill-grounded: but all agree to celebrate the advantage of hereditary riches, and to consider those as the minions of fortune, who are wealthy from their cradles, whose estate is 'res non parta labore sed relicta;' 'the acquisition of another, not of themselves;' and whom a father's industry has dispensed from a laborious attention to arts or commerce, and left at liberty to dispose of life as fancy shall direct them.

If every man were wise and virtuous, capable to discern the best use of time, and resolute to practise it; it might be granted, I think, without hesitation, that total liberty would be a blessing; and that it would be desirable to be left at large to the exercise of religious and social duties, without the interruption of importunate avocations.

But since felicity is relative, and that which is the means of happiness to one man may be to another the cause of misery, we are to consider, what state is best adapted to human nature in its present

degeneracy and frailty. And, surely, to far the greater number it is highly expedient, that they should by some settled scheme of duties be rescued from the tyranny of caprice, that they should be driven on by necessity through the paths of life with their attention confined to a stated task, that they may be less at leisure to deviate into mischief at the call of folly.

When we observe the lives of those whom an ample inheritance has let loose to their own direction, what do we discover that can excite our envy? Their time seems not to pass with much applause from others, or satisfaction to themselves: many squander their exuberance of fortune in luxury and debauchery, and have no other use of money than to enflame their passions, and riot in a wider range of licentiousness; others, less criminal indeed, but, surely, not much to be praised, lie down to sleep, and rise up to trifle, are employed every morning in finding expedients to rid themselves of the day, chase pleasure through all the places of public resort, fly from London to Bath and from Bath to London, without any other reason for changing place, but that they go in quest of company as idle and as vagrant as themselves, always endeavouring to raise some new desire that they may have something to pursue, to rekindle some hope which they know will be disappointed, changing one amusement for another which a few months will make equally insipid, or sinking into languor and disease for want of something to actuate their bodies, to exhilarate their minds.

Whoever has frequented those places, where idlers assemble to escape from solitude, knows that this is generally the state of the wealthy; and from this state it is no great hardship to be debarred. No man can be happy in total idleness: he that should be condemned to lie torpid and motionless, 'would fly for recreation,' says South, 'to the mines and the gal-

lies;' and it is well, when nature or fortune find employment for those who would not have known how to procure it for themselves.

He, whose mind is engaged by the acquisition or improvement of a fortune, not only escapes the insipidity of indifference, and the tediousness of inactivity, but gains enjoyments wholly unknown to those, who live lazily on the toil of others; for life affords no higher pleasure, than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes, and seeing them gratified. He that labours in any great or laudable undertaking, has his fatigues first supported by hope, and afterwards rewarded by joy; he is always moving to a certain end, and when he has attained it, an end more distant invites him to a new pursuit.

It does not, indeed, always happen, that diligence is fortunate; the wisest schemes are broken by unexpected accidents; the most constant perseverance sometimes toils through life without a recompence: but labour, though unsuccessful, is more eligible than idleness; he that prosecutes a lawful purpose by lawful means, acts always with the approbation of his own reason; he is animated through the course of his endeavours by an expectation which, though not certain, he knows to be just; and is at last comforted in his disappointment, by the consciousness that he has not failed by his own fault.

That kind of life is most happy which affords us most opportunities of gaining our own esteem; and what can any man infer in his own favour from a condition to which, however prosperous, he contributed nothing, and which the vilest and weakest of the species would have obtained by the same right, had he happened to be the son of the same father.

To strive with difficulties, and to conquer them, is the highest human felicity; the next, is to strive,

and deserve to conquer: but he whose life has passed without a contest, and who can boast neither success nor merit, can survey himself only as a useless filler of existence; and if he is content with his own character, must owe his satisfaction to insensibility.

Thus it appears that the satirist advised rightly, when he directed us to resign ourselves to the hands of Heaven, and to leave to superior powers the determination of our lot:

Permittes ipsis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris:
Carior est illis homo quam sibi.

Intrust thy fortune to the powers above:
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant
What their unerring wisdom sees thee want.
In goodness as in greatness they excel:
Ah! that we lov'd ourselves but half so well.

DRYDEN.

What state of life admits most happiness, is uncertain; but that uncertainty ought to repress the petulance of comparison, and silence the murmurs of discontent.

T

N° 112. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1753.

———*Has pœnas garrula lingua dedit.* OVID.

Such was the fate of vain loquacity.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

To be courteous to all, but familiar with few, is a maxim which I once despised, as originally proceeding from a mean and contracted mind, the frigid caution of weakness and timidity. A tame and indiscriminate servility I imputed to a dread of the contempt or the petulance of others, to fears from which the wit and the gentleman are exempted by a consciousness of their own dignity, by their power to repress insolence and silence ridicule; and a general shyness and reserve I considered as the reproach of our country, as the effect of an illiberal education, by which neither a polite address, an easy confidence, or a general acquaintance with public life, is to be acquired. This opinion, which continued to flatter the levity and pride that produced it, was strengthened by the example of those whose manner in the diffidence of youth I wished to imitate, who entered a mixed company with an air of serene familiarity, accosted every man like an old acquaintance, and thought only of making sport for the rest of any with whom their caprice should happen to be offended, without regard to their age, character, or condition.

But I now wish, that I had regulated my conduct by the maxim which I despised, for I should then have escaped a misfortune which I can never retrieve; and the sense of which I am now endeavouring to suspend, by relating it to you as a lesson to others, and considering my loss of happiness as an acquisition of wisdom.

While I was in France with a travelling tutor, I received a letter which acquainted me, that my father who had been long declining, was dead; and that it was necessary I should immediately return to England to take possession of his estate, which was not inconsiderable, though there were mortgages upon it to near half its value.

When I arrived, I found a letter which the old gentleman had written and directed to me with his own hand. It contained some general rules for my conduct, and some animadversions upon his own: he took notice of the incumbrance under which he left me the paternal inheritance, which had descended through many generations, and expressed the most earnest desire, that it might yet be transmitted intire to posterity: with this view, he said, he had negociated a marriage between me and the only daughter of his old friend, Sir George Homestead, of the North, an amiable young lady, whose alliance would be an honour to my family, and whose fortune would much more than redeem my estate.

He had given the knight a faithful account of his affairs, who, after having taken some time to consider the proposal and consult his friends, had consented to the match, upon condition that his daughter and I should be agreeable to each other, and my behaviour should confirm the character which had been given of me. My father added, that he hoped to have lived till this alliance had taken place; but as Providence had otherwise determined, he intreated, as his last

request, that as soon as my affairs should be settled, and decency would permit, I would make Sir George a visit, and neglect nothing to accomplish his purpose.

I was touched with the zeal and tenderness of parental affection, which was then directing me to happiness, after the heart that felt it had ceased to beat, and the hand that expressed it was mouldering in the dust. I had also seen the lady, not indeed since we were children; but I remember that her person was agreeable, and her temper sweet: I did not, therefore, hesitate a moment, whether my father's injunction should be obeyed. I proceeded to settle his affairs; I took an account of his debts and credits, visited the tenants, recovered my usual gaiety, and at the end of about nine months set out for Sir George's seat in the North; having before opened an epistolary correspondence, and expressed my impatience to possess the happiness which my father had so kindly secured.

I was better pleased to be well mounted, than to loll in a chariot, or be jumbled in a post-chaise; and I knew that Sir George was an old sportsman, a plain hearty blade, who would like me better in a pair of buckskin breeches on the back of a good hunter, than in a trimmed suit and a gaudy equipage; I, therefore, set out on horseback with only one servant, and reached Stilton the first night.

In the morning, as I was mounting, a gentleman, who had just got on horseback before me, ordered his servant to make some inquiry about the road, which I happened to overhear, and told him with great familiarity, that I was going the same ways, and if he pleased we would travel together: to this he consented with as much frankness, and as little ceremony; and I set forward, greatly delighted that chance had afforded me a companion.

We immediately entered into conversation, and I soon found that he had been abroad: we extolled the

roads and the policy of France, the cities, the palaces, and the villas; entered into a critical examination of the most celebrated seats in England, the peculiarities of the building and situation, cross ways, market towns, the imposition of innkeepers, and the sports of the field; topics by which we mutually recommended ourselves to each other, as we had both opportunities to discover equal knowledge, and to display truth with such evidence as prevented diversity of opinion.

After we had rode about two hours, we overtook another gentleman, whom we accosted with the same familiarity that we had used to each other; we asked him how far he was going and which way, at what rate he travelled, where he put up, and many other questions of the same kind. The gentleman, who appeared to be near fifty, received our address with great coolness, returned short and indirect answers to our inquiries, and, often looking with great attention on us both, sometimes put forward that he might get before us, and sometimes checked his horse that he might remain behind. But we were resolved to disappoint him; and, finding that his reserve increased, and he was visibly displeased, we winked at each other, and determined the old put should afford us some sport. After we had rode together upon very ill terms more than half an hour, my companion with an air of ceremonious gravity asked him, if he knew any house upon the road where he might be accommodated with a wench. The gentleman, who was, I believe, afraid of giving us a pretence to quarrel, did not resent this insult any otherwise than by making no reply. I then began to talk to my companion as if we had been old acquaintance, reminding him that the gentleman extremely resembled a person, from whom we had taken a girl that he was carrying to the bagnio, and, indeed, that his present reserve made me suspect him to be the same; but that as we were willing,

to ask his pardon, we hoped it would be forgot, and that we should still have the pleasure of dining together at the next inn. The gentleman was still silent; but as his perplexity and resentment visibly increased, he proportionably increased our entertainment, which did not, however, last long, for he suddenly turned down a lane; upon which we set up a horse laugh, that continued till he was out of hearing, and then pursuing our journey, we talked of the adventure, which afforded us conversation and merriment for the rest of the day.

The next morning we parted, and in the evening I arrived at Homestead Hall. The old knight received me with great affection, and immediately introduced me to his daughter, whom I now thought the finest woman I had ever seen. I could easily discover, that I was not welcome to her merely upon her father's recommendation, and I enjoyed by anticipation the felicity which I considered as within my grasp. But the pleasing scene, in which I had suffered my imagination to wander, suddenly disappeared as by the power of enchantment; without any visible motive, the behaviour of the whole family was changed, my assiduities to the lady were repressed, she was never to be found alone, the knight treated me with a cold civility, I was no longer a party in their visits, nor was I willingly attended even by the servants. I made many attempts to discover the cause of this misfortune, but without success, and one morning, when I had drawn Sir George into the garden by himself, and was about to urge him upon the subject, he prevented me by saying, that his promise to my father, for whom he had the highest regard, as I well knew, was conditional; that he had always resolved to leave his daughter a free choice, and that she had requested him to acquaint me, that her affections were otherwise engaged, and to entreat that I

would, therefore, discontinue my addresses. My surprize and concern at this declaration, were such as left me no power to reply; and I saw Sir George turn from me and go into the house, without making any attempt to stop him, or to obtain a further explanation. Afterwards, indeed, I frequently expostulated, intreated, and complained; but, perceiving that all was ineffectual, I took my leave, and determined that I would still solicit by letter; for the lady had taken such possession of my heart, that I would joyfully have married her, though I had been sure that her father would immediately have left all his fortune to a stranger.

I meditated on my epistolary project all the way to London, and before I had been three days in town I wrote a long letter to Sir George, in which I conjured him, in the strongest terms, to account for the change in his behaviour; and insisted, that, on this occasion, to conceal the truth, was in the highest degree dishonourable to himself, and injurious to me.

To this letter, after about ten days, I received the following answer:

'Sir,

'It is with great reluctance that I reveal the motives of my conduct, because they are much to your disadvantage. The inclosed is a letter which I received from a worthy gentleman in this county, and contains a full answer to your inquiries, which I had rather you should receive in any hand than in mine.

'I am your humble servant,

'GEO. HOMESTEAD.'

I immediately opened the paper inclosed, in which, with the utmost impatience, I read as follows:

'Sir,

'I saw a person with your family yesterday at the races, to whom, as I was soon after informed, you intended to give your daughter. Upon this occasion, it is my indispensable duty to acquaint you, that if his character is to be determined by his company, he will inevitably entail diseases and beggary upon his posterity, whatever be the merit of his wife, or the affluence of his fortune. He overtook me on the road from London a few weeks ago, in company with a wretch, who, by their discourse appeared to be his old and familiar acquaintance, and whom I well remember to have been brought before my friend Justice Worthy, when I was accidentally at his house, as the keeper of a brothel in Covent Garden. He has since won a considerable sum with false dice at the masquerade, for which he was obliged to leave the kingdom, and is still liable to a prosecution. Be assured that I have perfect knowledge of both; for some incidents, which it is not necessary to mention, kept me near them so long on the road, that it is impossible I should be mistaken.

'I am, Sir, your's, &c.

'JAMES TRUEMAN.'

The moment I had read this letter, the riddle was solved. I knew Mr. Trueman to be the gentleman, whom I had concurred with a stranger, picked up by accident, to insult without provocation on the road. I was in a moment covered with confusion; and though I was alone, could not help hiding my face with my hands. I abhorred my folly, which appeared yet more enormous every time it was reviewed.

I courted the society of a stranger, and a stranger I persecuted with insult: thus I associated with in-

famy, and thus my associate became known. I hoped, however, to convince Sir George, that I had no knowledge of the wretch whose infamy I had shared, except that which I acquired from the letter of his friend. But before I had taken proper measures for my justification, I had the mortification to hear, that the lady was married to a neighbouring gentleman, who had long made his addresses, and whom Sir George had before rejected in the ardour of his friendship for my father.

How narrow, Mr. Adventurer, is the path of rectitude, and how much may be lost by the slightest deviation!

I am your humble servant,

ARULUS.

N° 113. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1753.

Ad humum mærore gravi deducit & angit.

HOR.

Wrings the sad soul, and bends it down to earth.

FRANCIS.

One of the most remarkable differences betwixt ancient and modern tragedy, arises from the prevailing custom of describing only those distresses that are occasioned by the passion of love; a passion which, from the universality of its dominion, may doubtless justly claim a large share in representations of human life; but which, by totally engrossing the theatre, hath contributed to degrade that noble school of virtue into an academy of effeminacy.

When Racine persuaded the celebrated Arnauld to read his Phædra, 'Why,' said that severe critic to his friend, 'have you falsified the manners of Hippolitus, and represented him in love?' 'Alas!' replied the poet, 'without that circumstance, how would the ladies and the beaux have received my piece?' And it may well be imagined, that to gratify so considerable and important a part of his audience, was the powerful motive that induced Corneille to enervate even the matchless and affecting story of Œdipus, by the frigid and impertinent episode of Theseus's passion for Dirce.

Shakspeare has shewn us, by his Hamlet, Macbeth, and Cæsar, and above all by his Lear, that

very interesting tragedies may be written, that are not founded on gallantry and love; and that Boileau was mistaken, when he affirmed,

——de l'amour la sensible peinture,
Est pour aller au cœur la route la plus sûre.

Those tender scenes that pictur'd love impart,
Insure success, and best engage the heart.

The distresses in this tragedy are of a very uncommon nature, and are not touched upon by any other dramatic author. They are occasioned by a rash resolution of an aged monarch of strong passions and quick sensibility, to resign his crown and to divide his kingdom amongst his three daughters; the youngest of whom, who was his favourite, not answering his sanguine expectations in expressions of affection to him, he for ever banishes, and endows her sisters with her allotted share. Their unnatural ingratitude, the intolerable affronts, indignities, and cruelties he suffers from them, and the remorse he feels from his imprudent resignation of his power, at first inflame him with the most violent rage, and by degrees drive him to madness and death. This is the outline of the fable.

I shall confine myself at present to consider singly the judgment and art of the poet, in describing the origin and progress of the distraction of Lear; in which, I think, he has succeeded better than any other writer; even than Euripides himself, whom Longinus so highly commends for his representation of the madness of Orestes.

It is well contrived, that the first affront that is offered Lear, should be a proposal from Goneril, his eldest daughter, to lessen the number of his knights, which must needs affect and irritate a person so jealous of his rank and the respect due to

it. He is at first astonished at the complicated impudence and ingratitude of this design; but quickly kindles into rage, and resolves to depart instantly:

——Darkness and devils!——
Saddle my horses, call my train together—
Degen'rate bastard! I'll not trouble thee.—

This is followed by a severe reflection upon his own folly for resigning his crown; and a solemn invocation to Nature, to heap the most horrible curses on the head of Gonerill, that her own offspring may prove equally cruel and unnatural;

———that she may feel,
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
To have a thankless child!———

When Albany demands the cause of this passion, Lear answers, 'I'll tell thee!' but immediately cries out to Gonerill,

Life and death! I am ashamed,
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus.
——Blasts and fogs upon thee!
Th' untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee!

He stops a little and reflects:

Ha! is it come to this?
Let it be so! I have another daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable.
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails,
She'll flay thy wolfish visage——

He was, however, mistaken; for the first object he encounters in the castle of the earl of Gloucester, whither he fled to meet his other daughter, was his servant in the stocks; from whence he

may easily conjecture what reception he is to meet with:

> ———Death on my state! Wherefore
> Should he sit here.

He adds immediately afterwards,

> O me, my heart! my rising heart!—but down.

By which single line the inexpressible anguish of his mind, and the dreadful conflict of opposite passions with which it is agitated, are more forcibly expressed, than by the long and laboured speech, enumerating the causes of his anguish, that Rowe and other modern tragic writers would certainly have put into his mouth. But Nature, Sophocles, and Shakspeare, represent the feelings of the heart in a different manner; by a broken hint, a short exclamation, a word, or a look:

> They mingle not, 'mid deep-felt sighs and groans,
> Descriptions gay, or quaint comparisons,
> No flowery far-fetch'd thoughts their scenes admit;
> Ill suits conceit with passion, woe with wit.
> Here passion prompts each short, expressive speech;
> Or silence paints what words can never reach. J. W.

When Jocasta, in Sophocles, has discovered that Œdipus was the murderer of her husband, she immediately leaves the stage: but in Corneille and Dryden she continues on it during a whole scene, to bewail her destiny in set speeches. I should be guilty of insensibility and injustice, if I did not take this occasion to acknowledge, that I have been more moved and delighted, by hearing this single line spoken by the only actor of the age who understands and relishes these little touches of nature, and therefore the only one qualified to personate this most difficult character of Lear, than by

the most pompous declaimer of the most pompous speeches in Cato or Tamerlane.

In the next scene, the old king appears in a very distressful situation. He informs Regan, whom he believes to be still actuated by filial tenderness, of the cruelties he had suffered from her sister Gonerill in very pathetic terms:

——Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught—O Regan! she hath tied
Sharp tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here,
I scarce can speak to thee—thou'lt not believe,
With how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!

It is a stroke of wonderful art in the poet to represent him incapable of specifying the particular ill usage he has received, and breaking off thus abruptly, as if his voice was choked by tenderness and resentment.

When Regan counsels him to ask her sister forgiveness, he falls on his knees with a very striking kind of irony, and asks her how such supplicating language as this becometh him:

Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg,
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

But being again exhorted to sue for reconciliation, the advice wounds him to the quick, and forces him into execrations against Gonerill, which, though they chill the soul with horror, are yet well suited to the impetuosity of his temper:

She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpentlike, upon the very heart——
All the stor'd vengeances of heaven fall
On her ungrateful top! Strike her young bones,
Ye taking airs, with lameness!——
Ye nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes!——

The wretched king, little imagining that he is to be outcast from Regan also, adds very movingly;

> ———'Tis not in thee
> To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
> To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,—
> ———Thou better know'st
> The offices of nature, bond of childhood——
> Thy half o'th'kingdom thou has not forgot,
> Wherein I thee endow'd ——

That the hopes he had conceived of tender usage from Regan should be deceived, heightens his distress to a great degree. Yet it is still aggravated and increased, by the sudden appearance of Gonerill; upon the unexpected sight of whom he exclaims,

> ——Who comes here? O heavens!
> If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
> Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
> Make it your cause, send down and take my part!

This address is surely pathetic beyond expression; it is scarce enough to speak of it in the cold terms of criticism. There follows a question to Gonerill, that I have never read without tears:

> Ar't not ashamed to look upon this beard?

This scene abounds with many noble turns of passion; or rather conflicts of very different passions. The inhuman daughters urge him in vain, by all the sophistical and unfilial arguments they were mistresses of, to diminish the number of his train. He answers them by only four poignant words;

> I gave you all!

When Regan at last consents to receive him, but without any attendants, for that he might be served by her own domestics, he can no longer contain

his disappointment and rage. First he appeals to the heavens, and points out to them a spectacle that is indeed inimitably affecting:

> You see me here, ye Gods! a poor old man,
> As full of grief as age, wretched in both:
> If it be you that stir these daughters hearts
> Against their father, fool me not so much
> To bear it tamely!

Then suddenly he addresses Gonerill and Regan in the severest terms and with the bitterest threats:

> ——No, you unnatural hags!
> I will have such revenges on you both—
> That all the world shall—I will do such things—
> What they are yet, I know not.

Nothing occurs to his mind severe enough for them to suffer, or him to inflict. His passion rises to a height that deprives him of articulation. He tells them that he will subdue his sorrow, though almost irresistible; and that they shall not triumph over his weakness:

> ——You think I'll weep!
> No! I'll not weep; I have full cause of weeping;
> But this heart shall break into a thousand flaws,
> Or e'er I'll weep!

He concludes,

> O fool——I shall go mad!——

which is an artful anticipation, that judiciously prepares us for the dreadful event that is to follow in the succeeding acts.

N° 114. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1753.

Sperat infestis, metuit secundis,
Alteram sortem bene præparatum
Pectus. HOR.

Whoe'er enjoys th' untroubled breast,
With Virtue's tranquil wisdom blest;
With hope the gloomy hour can cheer,
And temper happiness with fear. FRANCIS.

ALMET, the Dervise, who watched the sacred lamp in the sepulchre of the Prophet, as he one day rose up from the devotions of the morning, which he had performed at the gate of the temple with his body turned towards the east and his forehead on the earth, saw before him a man in splendid apparel attended by a long retinue, who gazed stedfastly at him with a look of mournful complacence, and seemed desirous to speak, but unwilling to offend.

The Dervise, after a short silence, advanced, and saluting him with the calm dignity which independence confers upon humility, requested that he would reveal his purpose.

'Almet,' said the stranger, 'thou seest before thee a man, whom the hand of prosperity has overwhelmed with wretchedness. Whatever I once desired as the means of happiness, I now possess; but I am not yet happy, and therefore I despair. I regret the lapse of time, because it glides away without enjoyment; and as I expect nothing in the fu-

ture but the vanities of the past, I do not wish that the future should arrive. Yet I tremble lest it should be cut off; and my heart sinks when I anticipate the moment, in which eternity shall close over the vanity of my life like the sea upon the path of a ship, and leave no traces of my existence more durable than the furrow which remains after the waves have united. If in the treasures of thy wisdom there is any precept to obtain felicity, vouchsafe it to me; for this purpose I am come; a purpose which yet I feared to reveal, lest like all the former it should be disappointed.' Almet listened with looks of astonishment and pity, to this complaint of a being, in whom reason was known to be a pledge of immortality; but the serenity of his countenance soon returned; and stretching out his hand towards Heaven 'Stranger,' said he, 'the knowledge which I have received from the Prophet, I will communicate to thee.'

As I was sitting one evening at the porch of the temple pensive and alone, mine eye wandered among the multitude that was scattered before me; and while I remarked the weariness and solicitude which was visible in every countenance, I was suddenly struck with a sense of their condition. Wretched mortals, said I, to what purpose are you busy? if to produce happiness, by whom is it enjoyed? Do the linens of Egypt, and the silks of Persia, bestow felicity on those who wear them, equal to the wretchedness of yonder slaves whom I see leading the camels that bring them? Is the fineness of the texture, or the splendor of the tints, regarded with delight by those to whom custom has rendered them familiar? or can the power of habit render others insensible of pain, who live only to traverse the desart; a scene of dreadful uniformity, where a barren level is bounded only by the horizon?

where no change of prospect, or variety of images, relieves the traveller from a sense of toil and danger, of whirlwinds which in a moment may bury him in the sand, and of thirst, which the wealthy have given half their possessions to allay? Do those on whom hereditary diamonds sparkle with unregarded lustre, gain from the posession what is lost by the wretch who seeks them in the mine; who lives excluded from the common bounties of nature; to whom even the vicissitude of day and night is not known; who sighs in perpetual darkness, and whose life is one mournful alternative of insensibility and labour? If those are not happy who possess, in proportion as those are wretched who bestow, how vain a dream is the life of man! and if there is, indeed, such difference in the value of existence, how shall we acquit of partiality the hand by which this difference has been made?

While my thoughts thus multiplied, and my heart burned within me, I became sensible of a sudden influence from above. The streets and the crowds of Mecca disappeared; I found myself sitting on the declivity of a mountain, and perceived at my right hand an angel, whom I knew to be Azoran, the minister of reproof. When I saw him, I was afraid. I cast mine eye upon the ground, and was about to deprecate his anger, when he commanded me to be silent. 'Almet,' said he, 'thou hast devoted thy life to meditation, that thy counsel might deliver ignorance from the mazes of error, and deter presumption from the precipice of guilt; but the book of nature thou hast read without understanding: it is again open before thee: look up, consider it, and be wise.'

I looked up, and beheld an inclosure, beautiful as the gardens of Paradise, but of a small extent. Through the middle there was a green walk; at the

end, a wild desart; and beyond, impenetrable darkness. The walk was shaded with trees of every kind, that were covered at once with blossoms and fruit; innumerable birds were singing in the branches; the grass was intermingled with flowers, which impregnated the breeze with fragrance, and painted the path with beauty: on one side flowed a gentle transparent stream, which was just heard to murmur over the golden sands that sparkled at the bottom; and on the other were walks and bowers, fountains, grottoes, and cascades, which diversified the scene with endless variety, but did not conceal the bounds.

While I was gazing in a transport of delight and wonder on this enchanting spot, I perceived a man stealing along the walk with a thoughtful and deliberate pace: his eyes were fixed upon the earth, and his arms crossed on his bosom; he sometimes started, as if a sudden pang had seized him; his countenance expressed solicitude and terror; he looked round with a sigh, and having gazed a moment on the desart that lay before him, he seemed as if he wished to stop, but was impelled forwards by some invisible power: his features however soon settled again into a calm melancholy; his eye was again fixed on the ground; and he went on, as before, with apparent reluctance, but without emotion. I was struck with this appearance; and turning hastily to the Angel, was about to inquire what could produce such infelicity in a being, surrounded with every object that could gratify every sense; but he prevented my request: 'The book of nature,' said he, 'is before thee; look up, consider it, and be wise.' I looked, and beheld a valley between two mountains that were craggy and barren; on the path there was no verdure, and the mountains afforded no shade; the sun burned in the zenith, and every spring was dried up; but the valley terminated in a country that was pleasant and

fertile, shaded with woods, and adorned with buildings. At a second view, I discovered a man in this valley, meagre indeed and naked, but his countenance was chearful, and his deportment active: he kept his eye fixed upon the country before him, and looked as if he would have run, but that he was restrained, as the other had been impelled, by some secret influence: sometimes, indeed, I perceived a sudden expression of pain, and sometimes he stepped short as if his foot was pierced by the asperities of the way; but the sprightliness of his countenance instantly returned, and he pressed forward without appearance of repining or complaint.

I turned again toward the Angel, impatient to inquire from what secret source happiness was derived, in a situation so different from that in which it might have been expected: but he again prevented my request: 'Almet,' said he, 'remember what thou hast seen, and let this memorial be written upon the tablets of thy heart. Remember, Almet, that the world in which thou art placed, is but the road to another; and that happiness depends not upon the path, but the end: the value of this period of thy existence is fixed by hope and fear. The wretch who wished to linger in the garden, who looked round upon its limits with terror, was destitute of enjoyment, because he was destitute of hope, and was perpetually tormented by the dread of losing that which yet he did not enjoy: the song of the birds had been repeated till it was not heard, and the flowers had so often recurred, that their beauty was not seen; the river glided by unnoticed; and he feared to lift his eye to the prospect, lest he should behold the waste that circumscribed it. But he that toiled through the valley was happy, because he looked forward with hope. Thus, to the sojourner upon earth, it is of little moment, whether the path he treads be strewed with flowers or with thorns, if he per-

ceives himself to approach those regions, in comparison of which the thorns and the flowers of this wilderness lose their distinction, and are both alike impotent to give pleasure or pain.

'What then has Eternal Wisdom unequally distributed? That which can make every station happy, and without which every station must be wretched, is acquired by Virtue, and Virtue is possible to all. Remember, Almet, the vision which thou hast seen; and let my words be written on the tablet of thy heart, that thou mayest direct the wanderer to happiness, and justify God to men.'

While the voice of Azoran was yet sounding in my ear, the prospect vanished from before me, and I found myself again sitting at the porch of the temple. The sun was gone down, the multitude was retired to rest, and the solemn quiet of midnight concurred with the resolution of my doubts to complete the tranquillity of my mind.

Such, my son, was the vision which the Prophet vouchsafed me, not for my sake only, but for thine. Thou hast sought felicity in temporal things; and, therefore, thou art disappointed. Let not instruction be lost upon thee, as the seal of Mahomet in the well of Aris: but go thy way, let thy flock clothe the naked; and thy table feed the hungry; deliver the poor from oppression, and let thy conversation be Above. Thus shalt thou 'rejoice in Hope,' and look forward to the end of life as the consummation of thy felicity.

Almet, in whose breast devotion kindled as he spake, returned into the temple, and the stranger departed in peace.

N° 115. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1753.

Scribimus indocti doctique. HOR.

All dare to write, who can or cannot read.

THEY who have attentively considered the history of mankind, know that every age has its peculiar character. At one time, no desire is felt but for military honours: every summer affords battles and sieges, and the world is filled with ravage, bloodshed, and devastation: this sanguinary fury at length subsides, and nations are divided into factions, by controversies about points that will never be decided. Men then grow weary of debate and altercation, and apply themselves to the arts of profit; trading companies are formed, manufactures improved, and navigation extended: and nothing is any longer thought on, but the increase and preservation of property, the artifices of getting money, and the pleasures of spending it.

The present age, if we consider chiefly the state of our own country, may be stiled with great propriety The Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there never was a time, in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment, were posting with ardour so general to the press. The province of writing was formerly left to those, who by study, or appearance of study, were supposed to have gained knowledge

unattainable by the busy part of mankind; but in these enlightened days, every man is qualified to instruct every other man; and he that beats the anvil, or guides the plough, not content with supplying corporal necessities, amuses himself in the hours of leisure, with providing intellectual pleasures for his countrymen.

It may be observed, that of this, as of other evils, complaints have been made by every generation; but though it may, perhaps, be true, that at all times more have been willing than have been able to write, yet there is no reason for believing, that the dogmatical legions of the present race were ever equalled in number by any former period; for so widely is spread the itch of literary praise, that almost every man is an author, either in act or in purpose; has either bestowed his favours on the public, or withholds them, that they may be more seasonably offered, or made more worthy of acceptance.

In former times, the pen, like the sword, was considered as consigned by nature to the hands of men; the ladies contented themselves with private virtues and domestic excellence; and a female writer, like a female warrior, was considered as a kind of eccentric being, that deviated, however illustriously, from her due sphere of motion, and was, therefore, rather to be gazed at with wonder, than countenanced by imitation. But as the times past are said to have seen a nation of Amazons, who drew the bow and wielded the battle-ax, formed encampments and wasted nations; the revolution of years has now produced a generation of Amazons of the pen, who with the spirit of their predecessors have set masculine tyranny at defiance, asserted their claim to the regions of science, and seem resolved to contest the usurpations of vanity.

Some, indeed, there are of both sexes, who are authors only in desire but have not yet attained the power of executing their intentions; whose performances have not arrived at bulk sufficient to form a volume, or who have not the confidence, however impatient of nameless obscurity to solicit openly the assistance of the printer. Among these are the innumerable correspondents of public papers, who are always offering assistance which no man will receive, and suggesting hints that are never taken, and who complain loudly of the perverseness and arrogance of authors, lament their insensibility of their own interest, and fill the coffee-houses with dark stories of performances by eminent hands, which have been offered and rejected.

To what cause this universal eagerness of writing can be properly ascribed, I have not yet been able to discover. It is said, that every art is propagated in proportion to the rewards conferred upon it; a position from which a stranger would naturally infer, that literature was now blessed with patronage far transcending the candour or munificence of the Augustan age, that the road to greatness was open to none but authors, and that by writing alone riches and honour were to be obtained.

But since it is true, that writers, like other competitors, are very little disposed to favour one another, it is not to be expected, that at a time when every man writes, any man will patronize; and, accordingly, there is not one that I can recollect at present, who professes the least regard for the votaries of science, invites the addresses of learned men, or seems to hope for reputation from any pen but his own.

The cause, therefore, of this epidemical conspiracy for the destruction of paper, must remain a secret; nor can I discover, whether we owe it to

the influences of the constellations, or the intemperature of seasons: whether the long continuance of the wind at any single point, or intoxicating vapours exhaled from the earth, have turned our nobles and our peasants, our soldiers and traders, our men and women, all into wits, philosophers, and writers.

It is, indeed, of more importance to search out the cure than the cause of this intellectual malady; and he would deserve well of his country, who, instead of amusing himself with conjectural speculations, should find means of persuading the peer to inspect his steward's accounts, or repair the rural mansion of his ancestors, who could replace the tradesman behind his counter, and send back the farmer to the mattock and the flail.

General irregularities are known in time to remedy themselves. By the constitution of ancient Egypt, the priesthood was continually increasing, till at length there was no people beside themselves; the establishment was then dissolved, and the number of priests was reduced and limited. Thus among us, writers will, perhaps, be multiplied, till no readers will be found, and then the ambition of writing must necessarily cease.

But as it will be long before the cure is thus gradually effected, and the evil should be stopped, if it be possible, before it rises to so great a height, I could wish that both sexes would fix their thoughts upon some salutary considerations, which might repress their ardour for that reputation which not one of many thousands is fated to obtain.

Let it be deeply impressed and frequently recollected, that he who has not obtained the proper qualifications of an author, can have no excuse for the arrogance of writing, but the power of imparting to mankind something necessary to be known. A man

uneducated or unlettered may sometimes start a useful thought, or make a lucky discovery, or obtain by chance some secret of nature, or some intelligence of facts, of which the most enlightened mind may be ignorant, and which it is better to reveal, though by a rude and unskilful communication, than to lose for ever by suppressing it.

But few will be justified by this plea: for of the innumerable books and pamphlets that have overflowed the nation, scarce one has made any addition to real knowledge, or contained more than a transposition of common sentiments and a repetition of common phrases.

It will be naturally inquired, when the man who feels an inclination to write, may venture to suppose himself properly qualified; and, since every man is inclined to think well of his own intellect, by what test he may try his abilities, without hazarding the contempt or resentment of the public.

The first qualification of a writer, is a perfect knowledge of the subject which he undertakes to treat; since we cannot teach what we do not know, nor can properly undertake to instruct others while we are ourselves in want of instruction. The next requisite is, that he be master of the language in which he delivers his sentiments; if he treats of science and demonstration, that he has attained a style clear, pure, nervous, and expressive; if his topics be probable and persuasory, that he be able to recommend them by the superaddition of elegance and imagery, to display the colours of varied diction, and pour forth the music of modulated periods.

If it be again inquired, upon what principles any man shall conclude that he wants these powers, it may be readily answered, that no end is attained but by the proper means; he only can rationally presume that he understands a subject, who has read

and compared the writers that have hitherto discussed it, familiarized their arguments to himself by long meditation, consulted the foundations of different systems, and separated truth from error by a rigorous examination.

In like manner he only has a right to suppose that he can express his thoughts, whatever they are, with perspicuity or elegance, who has carefully perused the best authors, accurately noted their diversities of style, diligently selected the best modes of diction, and familiarized them by long habits of attentive practice.

No man is a rhetorician or philosopher by chance. He who knows that he undertakes to write on questions which he has never studied, may without hesitation determine, that he is about to waste his own time and that of his reader, and expose himself to the derision of those whom he aspires to instruct: he that without forming his style by the study of the best models, hastens to obtrude his compositions on the public, may be certain, that whatever hope or flattery may suggest, he shall shock the learned ear with barbarisms, and contribute, wherever his work shall be received, to the depravation of taste and the corruption of language.

T

N° 116. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1753.

——Æstuat ingens
Imo in corde pudor, mixtoque insania luctû,
Et furiis agitatus amor, & conscia virtus. VIRG.

Rage boiling from the bottom of his breast,
And sorrow mix'd with shame his soul opprest;
And conscious worth lay lab'ring in his thought;
And love by jealousy to madness wrought. DRYDEN

THUNDER and a ghost have been frequently introduced into tragedy by barren and mechanical playwrights, as proper objects to impress terror and astonishment, where the distress has not been important enough to render it probable that nature would interpose for the sake of the sufferers, and where these objects themselves have not been supported by suitable sentiments. Thunder has, however been made use of with great judgment and good effect by Shakspeare, to heighten and impress the distresses of Lear.

The venerable and wretched old king is driven out by both his daughters, without necessaries and without attendants, not only in the night, but in the midst of a most dreadful storm, and on a bleak and barren heath. On his first appearance in this situation, he draws an artful and pathetic compa-

rison betwixt the severity of the tempest and of his daughters:

> Rumble thy belly full! spit, fire! spout, rain!
> Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.
> I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness;
> I never gave you kingdom, called you children;
> You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
> Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave;
> A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man!

The storm continuing with equal violence, he drops for a moment the consideration of his own miseries, and takes occasion to moralize on the terrors which such commotions of nature should raise in the breast of secret and unpunished villainy:

> ———Tremble thou wretch,
> That hast within thee und-vulged crimes
> Unwhipt of justice! Hide thee, thou bloody hand;
> Thou perjur'd, and thou simular of virtue
> That art incestuous!—
> —Close pent-up guilts
> Rive your concealing continents, and cry
> These dreadful summoners grace!—

He adds with reference to his own case,

> ———I am a man
> More sinn'd against, than sinning.

Kent most earnestly entreats him to enter a hovel which he had discovered on the heath; and on pressing him again and again to take shelter there, Lear exclaims,

> Wilt break my heart?—

Much is contained in these four words; as if he had said, 'the kindness and the gratitude of this servant exceeds that of my own children. Though I have given them a kingdom, yet have they basely dis-

carded me, and suffered a head so old and white as mine to be exposed to this terrible tempest, while this fellow pities and would protect me from its rage. I cannot bear this kindness from a perfect stranger; it breaks my heart.' All this seems to be included in that short exclamation, which another writer, less acquainted with nature, would have displayed at large: such a suppression of sentiments plainly implied, is judicious and affecting. The reflections that follow are drawn likewise from an intimate knowledge of man:

> When the mind's free,
> The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
> Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
> Save what beats there———

Here the remembrance of his daughters' behaviour rushes upon him, and he exclaims, full of the idea of its unparalleled cruelty,

> ———Filial ingratitude!
> Is it not, as this mouth should tear this hand
> For lifting food to it!

He then changes his style, and vows with impotent menaces, as if still in possession of the power he had resigned, to revenge himself on his oppressors, and to steel his breast with fortitude:

> ———But I'll punish home.
> No, I will weep no more!———

But the sense of his sufferings returns again, and he forgets the resolution he had formed the moment before:

> In such a night,
> To shut me out?—Pour on, I will endure—
> In such a night as this?———

At which, with a beautiful apostrophe, he suddenly addresses himself to his absent daughters, tenderly reminding them of the favours he had so lately and so liberally conferred upon them:

> ——O Regan, Gonerill,
> Your old kind father; whose frank heart gave all!——
> O that way madness lies; let me shun that;
> No more of that!

The turns of passion in these few lines are so quick and so various, that I thought they merited to be minutely pointed out by a kind of perpetual commentary.

The mind is never so sensibly disposed to pity the misfortunes of others, as when it is itself subdued and softened by calamity. Adversity diffuses a kind of sacred calm over the breast, that is the parent of thoughtfulness and meditation. The following reflections of Lear in his next speech, when his passion has subsided for a short interval, are equally proper and striking:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er ye are,
> That bide the pelting of this pityless storm!
> How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these!

He concludes with a sentiment finely suited to his condition, and worthy to be written in characters of gold in the closet of every monarch upon earth:

> O! I have ta'en
> Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp!
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
> That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
> And shew the Heaven's more just!——

Lear being at last persuaded to take shelter in the hovel, the poet has artfully contrived to lodge there

Edgar, the discarded son of Gloucester, who counterfeits the character and habit of a mad beggar, haunted by an evil demon, and whose supposed sufferings are enumerated with an inimitable wildness of fancy; 'Whom the foul fiend hath led through fire, and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting horse over four inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor.—Bless thy five wits, Tom's a-cold!' The assumed madness of Edgar, and the real distraction of Lear, form a judicious contrast.

Upon perceiving the nakedness and wretchedness of this figure, the poor king asks a question that I never could read without strong emotions of pity and admiration:

> What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?
> Could'st thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

And when Kent assures him that the beggar hath no daughters; he hastily answers;

> Death, traitor, nothing could have subdued nature
> To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.

Afterwards, upon the calm contemplation of the misery of Edgar, he breaks out into the following serious and pathetic reflection: 'Thou wert better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more than such a poor,

bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here.'

Shakspeare has no where exhibited more inimitable strokes of his art, than in this uncommon scene; where he has so well conducted even the natural jargon of the beggar, and the jestings of the fool, which in other hands must have sunk into burlesque, that they contribute to heighten the pathetic to a very high degree.

The heart of Lear having been agitated and torn by a conflict of such opposite and tumultuous passions, it is not wonderful that his 'wits should now begin to unsettle.' The first plain indication of the loss of his reason, is his calling Edgar a 'learned Theban;' and telling Kent, that 'he will keep still with his philosopher.' When he next appears, he imagines he is punishing his daughters. The imagery is extremely strong, and chills one with horror to read it;

> To have a thousand with red burning spits
> Come hissing in upon them!———

As the fancies of lunatics have an extraordinary force and liveliness, and render the objects of their frenzy as it were present to their eyes, Lear actually thinks himself suddenly restored to his kingdom, and seated in judgment to try his daughters for their cruelties:

> I'll see their trial first; bring in the evidence.
> Thou robed man of justice take thy place;
> And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
> Bench by his side. You are of the commission,
> Sit you too. Arraign her first, 'tis Gonerill———
> And here's another, whose warpt looks proclaim
> What store her heart is made of———

Here he imagines that Regan escapes out of his hands, and he eagerly exclaims,

———Stop her there.
Arms, arms, sword, fire—Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

A circumstance follows that is strangely moving indeed: for he fancies that his favourite domestic creatures, that used to fawn upon and caress him, and of which he was eminently fond, have now their tempers changed, and joined to insult him:

———The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see! they bark at me.

He again resumes his imaginary power, and orders them to anatomize Regan; 'See what breeds about her heart—Is there any cause in nature, that makes these hard hearts? You, sir,' speaking to Edgar, 'I entertain for one of my hundred;' a circumstance most artfully introduced to remind us of the first affront he received, and to fix our thoughts on the causes of his distraction.

General criticism is on all subjects useless and unentertaining; but is more than commonly absurd with respect to Shakspeare, who must be accompanied step by step, and scene by scene, in his gradual developements of characters and passions, and whose finer features must be singly pointed out, if we would do complete justice to his genuine beauties. It would have been easy to have declared, in general terms 'that the madness of Lear was very natural and pathetic;' and the reader might then have escaped, what he may, perhaps, call a multitude of well-known quotations: but then it

had been impossible to exhibit a perfect picture of the secret workings and changes of Lear's mind, which vary in each succeeding passage, and which render an allegation of each particular sentiment absolutely necessary.

Z

N° 117. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1753.

Nequicquam patriæ tentâsti lubricus artes. VIRG.

Caught in the train which thou thyself hast laid.
DRYDEN.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

I WILL not anticipate the subject of this letter, by relating the motives from which I have written it; nor shall I expect it to be published, if, when you have read it, you do not think that it contains more than one topic of instruction.

My mother has been dead so long that I do not remember her; and when I was in my eighteenth year, I was left an orphan with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds at my own disposal. I have been often told, that I am handsome; and I have some reasons to believe it to be true, which are very far from gratifying my vanity or conferring happiness.

I was soon addressed by many lovers, from among whom I selected Hilario, the elder brother

of a good family whose paternal estate was something more than equivalent to my fortune.

Hilario was universally admired as a man of sense; and, to confess the truth, not much less as a man of pleasure. His character appeared to rise in proportion as it was thought to endanger those about him; he derived new dignity not only from the silence of the men, but the blushes of the ladies; and those, whose wit or virtue did not suffer by the admission of such a guest, were honoured as persons who could treat upon equal terms with a hero, who was become formidable by the number of his conquests: his company, therefore, was courted by all whom their fears did not restrain; the rest considered him as moving in a sphere above them, and in proportion as they were able to imitate him, they became vicious and petulant in their own circle.

I was myself captivated with his manner and conversation; I hoped that upon Understanding I should be able to engraft Virtue; I was rather encouraged than cautioned by my friends; and after a few months courtship I became his wife.

During a short time all my expectations were gratified, and I exulted in my choice. Hilario was at once tender and polite; present pleasures were heightened by the anticipation of future; my imagination was perpetually wandering among the scenes of poetry and romance; I appropriated every luxurious description of happy lovers; and believed, that whatever time should take from desire, would be added to complacency; and that in old age we should only exchange the tumultuous ecstacy of love, for the calm, rational, and exalted delights of friendship, which every year would increase by new reciprocations of kindness, more tried fidelity, and implicit confidence.

But from this pleasing dream it was not long before

I awaked: Although it was the whole study of my life to unite my pleasures with those of Hilario, to regulate my conduct by his will, and thus prolong the felicity which was reflected from his bosom to mine; yet his visits abroad in which I was not a party became more frequent, and his general behaviour less kind. I perceived that when we were alone his mind was often absent, and that my prattle became irksome: my assiduities to recover his attention, and excite him to cheerfulness, were sometimes suffered with a cold civility, sometimes wholly neglected, and sometimes peevishly repressed as ill-timed officiousness, by which he was rather disturbed than obliged. I was, indeed, at length convinced, with whatever reluctance, that neither my person nor my mind had any charm that could stand in competition with variety; and though, as I remember, I never even with my looks upbraided him, yet I frequently lamented myself, and spent those hours in which I was forsaken by Hilario in solitude and tears.

But my distress still increased, and one injury made way for another. Hilario, almost as soon as he ceased to be kind, became jealous; he knew that disappointed wishes, and the resentment which they produce, concur to render beauty less solicitous to avoid temptation, and less able to resist it; and as I did not complain of that which he knew I could not but discover, he thought he had greater reason to suspect that I made reprisals: thus his sagacity multiplied his vices, and my virtue defeated its own purpose.

Some maxims, however, which I had gathered from novels and plays, were still uppermost in my mind. I reflected often upon the arts of Amanda, and the persevering tenderness and discretion of Lady Easy; and I believed, as I had been taught by the sequel of every story, that they could not be

practised without success, but against sordid stupidity and obdurate ill-nature; against the Brutes and the Sullens, whom, on the contrary, it was scarce a crime to punish, by admitting a rake of parts to pleasures of which they were unworthy.

From such maxims, and such examples, I therefore derived some hope. I wished earnestly to detect Hilario in his infidelity; that in the moment of conviction I might rouse his sensibility of my wrongs, and exalt his opinion of my merit: that I might cover him with confusion, melt him with tenderness, and double his obligations by generosity.

The opportunity for which I had so often wished, but never dared to hope, at length arrived. I learned by accident one morning, that he intended to go in the evening to a masquerade; and I immediately conceived a design to discover his dress, and follow him to the theatre; to single him out, make some advances, and if possible bring on an assignation, where in the ardour of his first address I might strike him with astonishment by taking off my mask, reprove him without reproach, and forgive him without parade, mingling with the soft distress of violated affection the calm dignity of injured virtue.

My imagination was fired with these images, which I was impatient to realize. My pride, which had hitherto sustained me above complaint, and thrown a veil of cheerfulness over my distress, would not suffer me to employ an assistant in the project I had undertaken; because this could not be done without revealing my suspicions, and confiding my peace to the breast of another, by whose malice or caprice it might be destroyed, and to whom I should, therefore, be brought into the most slavish subjection, without insuring the secrecy of which my dependence would be the price. I, therefore resolved, at whatever risk of disappointment or detection, to trace him

to the warehouse where his habit was to be hired, and discover that which he should choose myself.

He had ordered his chariot at eleven: I, therefore, wrapped myself up in an undress, and sat alone in my room till I saw him drive from the door. I then came down, and as soon as he had turned into St. James's Street, which was not more than twenty yards, I went after him, and meeting with a hackney-coach at the end of the street, I got hastily into it, and ordered the driver to follow the chariot at some distance, and to stop when it stopped.

I pulled up both the windows; and after half an hour spent in the most tormenting suspense and anxiety, it stopped at the end of Tavistock Street. I looked hastily out of the window, hiding my face with my handkerchief, and saw Hilario alight at the distance of about forty yards, and go into a warehouse of which I could easily distinguish the sign. I waited till he came out, and as soon as the chariot was out of sight, I discharged the coach, and going immediately to the warehouse that Hilario had left, I pretended to want a habit for myself. I saw many lying upon the counter, which I supposed had been brought out for Hilario's choice; about these, therefore, I was very inquisitive, and took particular notice of a very rich Turkish dress, which one of the servants took up to put away. When I saw he was about to remove it, I asked hastily whether it was hired, and learned with unspeakable satisfaction, that it had been chosen by the gentleman who was just gone. Thus far I succeeded to the utmost of my hopes, not only by discovering Hilario's dress, but by his choice of one so very remarkable; for if he had chosen a domino, my scheme would have been rendered impracticable, because in a domino I could not certainly have distinguished him from others.

As I had now gained the intelligence I wanted, I

was impatient to leave the shop; which it was not difficult to do, as it was just filled with ladies from two coaches, and the people were in a hurry to accommodate them. My dress did not attract much notice, nor promise much advantage; I was, therefore, willingly suffered to depart, upon slightly leaving word that I would call again.

When I got into the street, I considered that it would not have been prudent to have hired a habit, where Hilario would either come to dress, or send for that which he had hired for himself: I, therefore, took another coach at the end of Southampton Street, and went to a shop near the Haymarket, where I had before purchased a capuchin, and some other trifles, and where I knew habits were to be hired, though not in so public a manner as at other places.

I now returned home; and such was the joy and expectation which my success inspired, that I had forgot I had succeeded only in an attempt, for which I could find neither motive nor apology but in my wretchedness.

During the interval between my return and the time when the doors of the theatre were to be opened, I suffered the utmost inquietude and impatience. I looked every moment at my watch, could scarce believe that it did not by some accident go too slow, and was continually listening to discover whether it had not stopped: but the lingering hour at length arrived; and though I was among the first that entered, yet it was not long before I singled out my victim, and found means to attract his regard.

I had, when I was at school, learned a way of expressing the alphabet with my fingers, which I have since discovered to be more generally known than at that time I imagined. Hilario, during his courtship, had once observed me using it to a lady who had been my school-fellow, and would never let me rest till I

had taught it him. In this manner I saw my Turk conversing with a Nun, from whom he suddenly turned with an appearance of vexation and disappointment. I thought this a favourable opportunity to accost him; and, therefore, as he passed by me, I pulled him gently by the sleeve, and spelt with my fingers the words, 'I understand.' At first I was afraid of being discovered by shewing my art; but I reflected, that it would effectually secure me from being discovered by my voice, which I considered as the more formidable danger. I perceived that he was greatly pleased; and after a very short conversation, which he seemed to make a point of continuing in the manner I had begun, an assignation was made, in consequence of which we proceeded in chairs to a bagnio near Covent Garden. During this journey my mind was in great agitation; and it is difficult to determine whether pleasure or pain was predominant. I did not, however, fail to anticipate my triumph in the confusion of Hilario; I conceived the manner and the terms in which I would address him, and exulted in the superiority which I should acquire by this opposition of his character to mine.

N° 118. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1753.

——————Animorum
Impulsu et cæcâ magnaque cupidine ducti. JUV.

By blind impulse of eager passion driv'n.

He was ready to receive me when my chair was brought into the entry, and giving me his hand, led me hastily up stairs. As soon as we entered the room he shut the door, and, taking off his mask, ran to me with the utmost impatience to take off mine. This was the important moment; but at this moment I discovered, with inexpressible astonishment and terror, that the person with whom I was alone in a brothel, was not Hilario, but Caprinus, a wretch whom I well remembered to have seen among the rakes that he frequently brought to his table.

At this sight, so unexpected and so dreadful, I shrieked aloud, and threw myself from him into an easy chair that stood by the bedside. Caprinus, probably believing I had fainted, hastily tore away my mask to give me air. At the first view of my face, he started back, and gazed at me with the same wonder that had fixed my eyes upon him. But our amazement was the next moment increased; for Hilario, who had succeeded in his intrigue, with whatever lady, happened to be in the next room, and either alarmed by the voice of distress, or knowing it to be mine, rushed in at the door which flew open before him; but, at the next

step, stood fixed in the same stupor of astonishment which had seized us. After a moment's recollection, he came up to me, and dragging me to the candle, gazed stedfastly in my face with a look so frightful as never to be forgotten; it was the pale countenance of rage, which contempt had distorted with a smile; his lips quivered, and he told me, in a voice scarce articulate, that 'though I might well be frighted at having stumbled upon an acquaintance whom I doubted whether I could trust, yet I should not have screamed so loud.' After this insult, he quitted me with as much negligence as he could assume; and bowing obsequiously to Caprinus, told him, 'he would leave me to his care.' Caprinus had not sufficient presence of mind to reply; nor had I power to make any attempt, either to pacify or retain Hilario.

When he was gone I burst into tears, but was still unable to speak. From this agony Caprinus laboured to relieve me; and I began to hope, that he sincerely participated my distress: Caprinus, however, soon appeared to be chiefly solicitous to improve what, with respect to himself, he began to think a fortunate mistake. He had no conception, that I intended an assignation with my husband; but believed, like Hilario, that I had mistaken the person for whom my favours were intended: while he lamented my distress and disappointment, therefore, he pressed my hand with great ardor, wished that he had been thought worthy of my confidence and my love; and, to facilitate his design upon the wife of his friend, declared himself a man of honour, and that he would maintain the character at the hazard of his life.

To such an address, in such circumstances, what could I reply? Grief had disarmed my resentment, and the pride of suspected virtue had forsaken me. I expressed myself, not in reproaches but complaints; and abruptly disengaging myself from him, I adjured

him to tell me, 'how he had procured his habit, and whether it had not been hired by Hilario?' He seemed to be struck with the question, and the manner in which I urged it: 'I hired it,' said he, 'myself, at a warehouse in Tavistock Street; but when I came to demand it, I was told it had been the subject of much confusion and dispute. When I made my agreement, the master was absent; and the servant neglecting to acquaint him with it at his return, he afterwards, in the absence of the servant, made the same agreement with another; but I know not with whom; and it was with great difficulty that he was brought to relinquish his claim, after he had been convinced of the mistake.'

I now clearly discovered the snare in which I had been taken, and could only lament that it was impossible to escape. Whether Caprinus began to conceive my design, or whether he was indeed touched at my distress, which all his attempts to alleviate increased, I know not; but he desisted from further protestations and importunity, and at my earnest request procured me a chair, and left me to my fortune.

I now reflected, with inconceivable anguish, upon the change which a few hours had made in my condition. I had left my house in the height of expectation, that in a few hours I should add to the dignity of an untainted reputation the felicity of conjugal endearments. I returned disappointed and degraded; detected in all the circumstances of guilt, to which I had not approached even in thought; having justified the jealousy which I sought to remove, and forfeited the esteem which I hoped to improve to veneration. With these thoughts I once more entered my dressing-room, which was on the same floor with my chamber, and in less than half an hour I heard Hilario come in.

He went immediately to his chamber; and being

told that I was in the next room, he locked the door, but did not go to bed, for I could hear him walk backward and forward all the night.

Early in the morning I sent a sealed billet to him by his valet; for I had not made a confidante, even of my woman: it contained only a pressing intreaty to be heard, and a solemn asseveration of my innocence, which I hoped it would not be impossible to prove. He sent me a verbal answer, that I might come to him: to him, therefore, I went, not as a judge but a criminal; not to accuse him whom I knew to be guilty, but to justify myself, whom I knew to be innocent; and, at this moment, I would have given the world to have been restored to that state, which the day before I had thought intolerable.

I found him in great agitation; which yet he laboured to conceal. I, therefore, hasted to relate my project, the motives from which it was undertaken, and the means by which it had been disappointed. He heard me with calmness and attention, till I related the particular of the habit: this threw him into a new fit of jealousy, and starting from his seat, 'What,' said he, 'have you paid for this intelligence? Of whom could you learn it, but the wretch with whom I left you? Did he not, when he found you were disappointed of another, solicit for himself?' Here he paused for my reply; and as I could not deny the fact, I was silent; my inviolable regard for truth was mistaken for the confusion of guilt, and equally prevented my justification. His passion returned with yet greater violence. 'I know,' said he, 'that Caprinus related this incident, only that you might be enabled to impose upon my credulity, and that he might obtain a participation of the favours which you lavished upon others: but I am not thus to be deceived by the concurrence of accident with cunning, nor reconciled to the infamy which you have

brought upon my name.' With this injurious reproach he would have left me; but I caught hold of him, and intreated that he would go with me to the warehouse, where the testimony of persons, wholly disinterested, might convince him that I was there immediately after him, and inquired which dress he had chosen. To this request he replied, by asking me, in a peremptory tone, 'Whether Caprinus had not told me where the habit was hired?' As I was struck with the suddenness and the design of the question, I had not fortitude to confess a truth which yet I disdained to deny. Hilario again triumphed in the successful detection of my artifices; and told me, with a sneer of insupportable contempt and derision, that 'he who had so kindly directed me to find my witnesses, was too able a solicitor not to acquaint them what testimony they were to give.'

Expostulation was now at an end, and I disdained to intreat any mercy under the imputation of guilt. All that remained, therefore, was still to hide my wretchedness in my bosom; and, if possible, to preserve that character abroad, which I had lost at home. But this I soon found to be a vain attempt; it was immediately whispered, as a secret, that, 'Hilario, who had long suspected me of a criminal correspondence, had at length traced me from the masquerade to a bagnio, and surprized me with a fellow.' It was in vain for me to attempt the recovery of my character by giving another turn to this report, for the principal facts I could not deny; and those who appeared to be most my friends, after they had attended to what they call nice distinctions and minute circumstances, could only say that it was a dark affair, and they hoped I was not so guilty as was generally believed. I was avoided by my female acquaintance as infamous: if I went abroad, I was pointed out with a whisper and a nod; and if I stayed at home, I saw

no face but my servant's. Those, whose levity I had silently censured by declining to practise it, now revenged themselves of the virtue by which they were condemned, and thanked God they had never yet picked up fellows, though they were not so squeamish as to refuse going to a ball. But this was not the worst; every libertine, whose fortune authorized the insolence, was now making me offers of protection in nameless scrawls, and feared not to solicit me to adultery; they dared to hope I should accept their proposal by directing to A B, who declares, like Caprinus, that he is a man of honour, and will not scruple to run my husband through the body, who now, indeed, thought himself authorized to treat me with every species of cruelty but blows, at the same time that his house was a perpetual scene of lewdness and debauchery.

Reiterated provocation and insult soon became intolerable: I therefore applied to a distant relation, who so far interested himself in my behalf as to obtain me a separate maintenance, with which I retired into the country, and in this world have no hope but to perpetuate my obscurity.

In this obscurity, however, your paper is known; and I have communicated an adventure to the Adventurer, not merely to indulge complaint, or gratify curiosity, but because I think it confirms some principles which you have before illustrated.

Those who doubt of a future retribution, may reflect, that I have been involved in all the miseries of guilt, except the reproach of conscience and the fear of hell, by an attempt which was intended to reclaim another from vice, and obtain the reward of my own virtue.

My example may deter others from venturing to the verge of rectitude, and assuming the appearance of evil. On the other hand, those who judge of

mere appearances without charity, may remark, that no conduct was ever condemned with less shew of injurious severity, nor yet with less justice than mine. Whether my narrative will be believed indeed I cannot determine; but where innocence is possible, it is dangerous to impute guilt, 'because with whatsoever judgment men judge they shall be judged;' a truth which, if it was remembered and believed by all who profess to receive it upon Divine Authority, would impose silence upon the censorious, and extort candour from the selfish. And I hope that the ladies, who read my story, will never hear, but with indignation, that the understanding of a Libertine is a pledge of reformation; for his life cannot be known without abhorrence, nor shared without ruin.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

DESDEMONA.

N° 119. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1753.

Latiùs regnes, avidum domando
Spiritum, quàm si Lybiam remotis
Gadibus jungas, et uterque Pœnus
Serviat uni. HOR.

By virtue's precepts to controul
The thirsty cravings of the soul,
Is over wider realms to reign
Unenvied monarch, than if Spain
You could to distant Lybia join,
And both the Carthages were thine. FRANCIS.

WHEN Socrates was asked, 'which of mortal men was to be accounted nearest to the Gods in happiness?' he answered, 'that man, who is in want of the fewest things.'

In this answer, Socrates left it to be guessed by his auditors, whether, by the exemption from want which was to constitute happiness, he meant amplitude of possessions or contraction of desire. And, indeed, there is so little difference between them, that Alexander the Great confessed the inhabitant of a tub the next man to the master of the world; and left a declaration to future ages, that if he was not Alexander, he should wish to be Diogenes.

These two states, however, though they resemble each other in their consequence, differ widely with respect to the facility with which they may be attained. To make great acquisitions can happen to very few; and in the uncertainty of human affairs, to many it will be incident to labour without re-

ward, and to lose what they already possess by endeavours to make it more; some will always want abilities, and others opportunities, to accumulate wealth. It is therefore happy, that nature has allowed us a more certain and easy road to plenty; every man may grow rich by contracting his wishes, and by quiet acquiescence in what has been given him, supply the absence of more.

Yet so far is almost every man from emulating the happiness of the Gods, by any other means than grasping at their power; that it seems to be the great business of life to create wants as fast as they are satisfied. It has been long observed by moralists, that every man squanders or loses a great part of that life, of which every man knows and deplores the shortness: and it may be remarked with equal justness, that though every man laments his own insufficiency to his happiness, and knows himself a necessitous and precarious being, incessantly soliciting the assistance of others, and feeling wants which his own art or strength cannot supply; yet there is no man, who does not, by the superaddition of unnatural cares, render himself still more dependent; who does not create an artificial poverty, and suffer himself to feel pain for the want of that, of which, when it is gained, he can have no enjoyment.

It must, indeed, be allowed, that as we lose part of our time because it steals away silent and invisible, and many an hour is passed before we recollect that it is passing; so unnatural desires insinuate themselves unobserved into the mind, and we do not perceive that they are gaining upon us, till the pain which they give us awakens us to notice. No man is sufficiently vigilant to take account of every minute of his life, or to watch every motion of his heart. Much of our time likewise is

sacrificed to custom; we trifle, because we see others trifle: in the same manner we catch from example the contagion of desire; we see all about us busied in pursuit of imaginary good, and begin to bustle in the same chace, lest greater activity should triumph over us.

It is true, that to man, as a member of society, many things become necessary, which, perhaps, in a state of nature are superfluous; and that many things, not absolutely necessary, are yet so useful and convenient, that they cannot easily be spared. I will make yet a more ample and liberal concession. In opulent states and regular governments, the temptations to wealth and rank, and to the distinctions that follow them, are such as no force of understanding finds it easy to resist.

If, therefore, I saw the quiet of life disturbed only by endeavours after wealth and honour; by solicitude, which the world, whether justly or not, considered as important; I should scarcely have had courage to inculcate any precepts of moderation and forbearance. He that is engaged in a pursuit, in which all mankind profess to be his rivals, is supported by the authority of all mankind in the prosecution of his design, and will, therefore, scarcely stop to hear the lectures of a solitary philosopher. Nor am I certain, that the accumulation of honest gain ought to be hindered, or the ambition of just honours always to be repressed. Whatever can enable the possessor to confer any benefit upon others, may be desired upon virtuous principles; and we ought not too rashly to accuse any man of intending to confine the influence of his acquisitions to himself.

But if we look round upon mankind, whom shall we find among those that fortune permits to form their own manners, that is not tormenting him-

self with a wish for something, of which all the pleasure and all the benefit will cease at the moment of attainment? One man is beggaring his posterity to build a house, which when finished he never will inhabit; another is levelling mountains to open a prospect, which, when he has once enjoyed it, he can enjoy no more; another is painting cielings, carving wainscot, and filling his apartments with costly furniture, only that some neighbouring house may not be richer or finer than his own.

That splendour and elegance are not desireable, I am not so abstracted from life as to inculcate; but if we inquire closely into the reason for which they are esteemed, we shall find them valued principally as evidences of wealth. Nothing, therefore, can shew greater depravity of understanding, than to delight in the shew when the reality is wanting; or voluntarily to become poor, that strangers may for a time imagine us to be rich.

But there are yet minuter objects and more trifling anxieties. Men may be found, who are kept from sleep by the want of a shell particularly variegated; who are wasting their lives, in stratagems to obtain a book in a language which they do not understand; who pine with envy at the flowers of another man's parterre; who hover like vultures round the owner of a fossil, in hopes to plunder his cabinet at his death; and who would not much regret to see a street in flames, if a box of medals might be scattered in the tumult.

He that imagines me to speak of these sages in terms exaggerated and hyperbolical, has conversed but little with the race of virtuosos. A slight acquaintance with their studies, and a few visits to their assemblies, would inform him, that nothing is so worthless, but that prejudice and caprice can

give it value; nor any thing of so little use, but that by indulging an idle competition or unreasonable pride, a man may make it to himself one of the necessaries of life.

Desires like these, I may surely, without incurring the censure of moroseness, advise every man to repel when they invade his mind; or if he admits them, never to allow them any greater influence than is necessary to give petty employments the power of pleasing, and diversify the day with slight amusements.

An ardent wish, whatever be its object, will always be able to interrupt tranquillity. What we believe ourselves to want, torments us not in proportion to its real value, but according to the estimation by which we have rated it in our own minds: in some diseases, the patient has been observed to long for food, which scarce any extremity of hunger would in health have compelled him to swallow; but while his organs were thus depraved the craving was irresistible, nor could any rest be obtained till it was appeased by compliance. Of the same nature are the irregular appetites of the mind; though they are often excited by trifles, they are equally disquieting with real wants: the Roman, who wept at the death of his lamprey, felt the same degree of sorrow that extorts tears on other occasions.

Inordinate desires, of whatever kind, ought to be repressed upon yet a higher consideration; they must be considered as enemies not only to Happiness but to Virtue. There are men among those commonly reckoned the learned and the wise, who spare no stratagems to remove a competitor at an auction, who will sink the price of a rarity at the expence of truth, and whom it is not safe to trust alone in a library or cabinet. These are faults,

which the fraternity seem to look upon as jocular mischiefs, or to think excused by the violence of the temptation: but I shall always fear that he, who accustoms himself to fraud in little things, wants only opportunity to practise it in greater; 'he that has hardened himself by killing a sheep,' says Pythagoras, 'will with less reluctance shed the blood of a man.'

To prize every thing according to its real use, ought to be the aim of a rational being. There are few things which can much conduce to Happiness, and, therefore, few things to be ardently desired. He that looks upon the business and bustle of the world, with the philosophy with which Socrates surveyed the fair at Athens, will turn away at last with his exclamation, 'How many things are here which I do not want!'

T

N° 120. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1753.

——Ultimo semper
Expectanda dies homini, dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet. OVID.

But no frail man, however great or high,
Can be concluded blest before he die. ADDISON.

THE numerous miseries of human life have extorted in all ages an universal complaint. The wisest of men terminated all his experiments in search of happiness, by the mournful confession, that 'all is vanity;' and the ancient patriarchs lamented, that 'the days of their pilgrimage were few and evil.'

There is, indeed, no topic on which it is more superfluous to accumulate authorities, nor any assertion of which our own eyes will more easily discover, or our sensations more frequently impress the truth, than, that misery is the lot of man, that our present state is a state of danger and infelicity.

When we take the most distant prospect of life, what does it present us but a chaos of unhappiness, a confused and tumultuous scene of labour and contest, disappointment and defeat? If we view past ages in the reflection of history, what do they offer to our meditation but crimes and calamities? One year is distinguished by a famine, another by an earthquake; kingdoms are made desolate, sometimes by wars, and sometimes by pestilence; the peace of the world is interrupted at one time by the caprices of a tyrant, at another by the rage of a conqueror. The memory is stored only with vicissitudes of evil; and the happiness, such as it is, of one part of mankind, is found to arise commonly from sanguinary success, from victories which confer upon them the power, not so much of improving life by any new enjoyment, as of inflicting misery on others, and gratifying their own pride by comparative greatness.

But by him that examines life with a more close attention, the happiness of the world will be found still less than it appears. In some intervals of public prosperity, or to use terms more proper, in some intermissions of calamity, a general diffusion of happiness may seem to overspread a people; all is triumph and exultation, jollity and plenty; there are no public fears and dangers, and 'no complainings in the streets.' But the condition of individuals is very little mended by this general calm: pain and malice and discontent still continue their havock; the silent depredation goes incessantly forward; and the grave continues to be filled by the victims of sorrow.

He that enters a gay assembly, beholds the cheerfulness displayed in every countenance, and finds all sitting vacant and disengaged, with no other attention than to give or to receive pleasure; would naturally imagine, that he had reached at last the metropolis of felicity, the place sacred to gladness of heart, from whence all fear and anxiety were irreversibly excluded. Such, indeed, we may often find to be the opinion of those, who from a lower station look up to the pomp and gaiety which they cannot reach; but who is there of those who frequent these luxurious assemblies, that will not confess his own uneasiness, or cannot recount the vexations and distresses that prey upon the lives of his gay companions?

The world, in its best state, is nothing more than a larger assembly of beings, combining to counterfeit happiness which they do not feel, employing every art and contrivance to embellish life, and to hide their real condition from the eyes of one another.

The species of happiness most obvious to the observation of others is that which depends upon the goods of fortune; yet even this is often fictitious. There is in the world more poverty than is generally imagined; not only because many whose possessions are large have desires still larger, and many measure their wants by the gratifications which others enjoy; but great numbers are pressed by real necessities which it is their chief ambition to conceal, and are forced to purchase the appearance of competence and cheerfulness at the expence of many comforts and conveniencies of life.

Many, however, are confessedly rich, and many more are sufficiently removed from all danger of real poverty: but it has been long ago remarked, that money cannot purchase quiet; the highest of mankind can promise themselves no exemption from that discord or suspicion, by which the sweetness of domestic

retirement is destroyed; and must always be even more exposed, in the same degree as they are elevated above others, to the treachery of dependents, the calumny of defamers, and the violence of opponents.

Affliction is inseparable from our present state; it adheres to all the inhabitants of this world in different proportions indeed, but with an allotment which seems very little regulated by our own conduct. It has been the boast of some swelling moralists, that every man's fortune was in his own power, that prudence supplied the place of all other divinities, and that happiness is the unfailing consequence of virtue. But, surely, the quiver of Omnipotence is stored with arrows, against which the shield of human virtue, however adamantine it has been boasted, is held up in vain: we do not always suffer by our crimes; we are not always protected by our innocence.

A Good Man is by no means exempt from the danger of suffering by the crimes of others; even his goodness may raise him enemies of implacable malice and restless perseverance: the Good Man has never been warranted by Heaven from the treachery of friends, the disobedience of children, or the dishonesty of a wife; he may see his cares made useless by profusion, his instructions defeated by perverseness, and his kindness rejected by ingratitude; he may languish under the infamy of false accusations, or perish reproachfully by an unjust sentence.

A Good Man is subject, like other mortals, to all the influences of natural evil: his harvest is not spared by the tempest, nor his cattle by the murrain; his house flames like others in a conflagration; nor have his ships any peculiar power of resisting hurricanes: his mind, however elevated, inhabits a body subject to innumerable casualties, of which he must always share the dangers and the pains; he bears about him the seeds of disease, and may linger away a great part of

his life under the tortures of the gout or stone; at one time groaning with insufferable anguish, at another dissolved in listlessness and languor.

From this general and indiscriminate distribution of misery, the moralists have always derived one of their strongest moral arguments for a Future State; for since the common events of the present life happen alike to the good and bad, it follows from the Justice of the Supreme Being, that there must be another state of existence, in which a just retribution shall be made, and every man shall be happy and miserable according to his works.

The miseries of life may, perhaps, afford some proof of a future state, compared as well with the Mercy as the Justice of God. It is scarcely to be imagined, that Infinite Benevolence would create a being capable of enjoying so much more than is here to be enjoyed, and qualified by nature to prolong pain by remembrance, and anticipate it by terror, if he was not designed for something nobler and better than a state, in which many of his faculties can serve only for his torment: in which he is to be importuned by desires that never can be satisfied, to feel many evils which he had no power to avoid, and to fear many which he shall never feel: there will surely come a time, when every capacity of happiness shall be filled, and none shall be wretched but by his own fault.

In the mean time, it is by affliction chiefly that the heart of man is purified, and that the thoughts are fixed upon a better state. Prosperity, allayed and imperfect as it is, has power to intoxicate the imagination, to fix the mind upon the present scene, to produce confidence and elation, and to make him who enjoys affluence and honours forget the hand by which they were bestowed. It is seldom that we are otherwise, than by affliction, awakened to a sense of our own imbecility, or taught to know how little all our acquisitions can

conduce to safety or to quiet; and how justly we may ascribe to the superintendence of a Higher Power, those blessings which in the wantonness of success we considered as the attainments of our policy or courage

Nothing confers so much ability to resist the temptations that perpetually surround us, as an habitual consideration of the shortness of life, and the uncertainty of those pleasures that solicit our pursuit; and this consideration can be inculcated only by affliction. 'O Death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that lives at ease in his possessions!' If our present state were one continued succession of delights, or one uniform flow of calmness and tranquillity, we should never willingly think upon its end; death would then surely surprise us as 'a thief in the night;' and our task of duty would remain unfinished, till 'the night came when no man can work.'

While affliction thus prepares us for felicity, we may console ourselves under its pressures, by remembering, that they are no particular marks of Divine Displeasure; since all the distresses of persecution have been suffered by those 'of whom the world was not worthy;' and the Redeemer of Mankind himself was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'

N° 121. TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1754.

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus, Lavinaque venit
Litora. Multum ille et terris jactatus et alto:

Multa quoque et bello passus. VIRG.

Arms and the man I sing, who forc'd by fate,

Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan shore.
Long labours, both by sea and land, he bore,
And in the doubtful war. DRYDEN.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

A FEW nights ago, after I came home from the tavern, I took up the first volume of your papers, which at present is deposited near the elbow chair in my chamber, and happened to read the fifth number, which contains the narrative of a Flea. After I fell asleep, I imagined the book still to lie open before me, and that at the bottom of the page I saw, not a Flea but a Louse, who addressed me with such solemnity of accent, that it brought to my mind some orations which I had formerly heard in Saint Stephen's chapel.

Sir, said he, it has been remarked by those, who have enriched themselves from the mines of knowledge by deep researches and laborious study, that sublunary beings are all mortal, and that life is a

state of perpetual peril and inquietude; such, indeed, hitherto has been my experience; and yet I do not remember, that I have brought calamity upon myself by any uncommon deviations either from virtue or prudence.

I was hatched in the head of a boy about eight years old, who was placed under the care of a parish nurse, and educated at the charity-school. In this place, as in a populous city, I soon obtained a settlement; and as our state of adolescence is short, had in a few months a numerous family. This indeed was the happiest period of my life; I suffered little apprehension from the comb or the razor, and foresaw no misfortune, except that our country should be overstocked, and we should be compelled to wander, like the Barbarians of the North, in search of another. But it happened that the lord of our soil, in an evil hour, went with some of his companions to Highgate. Just at the top of the hill was a stage and a mountebank, where several feats of wit and humour were performed by a gentleman with a gridiron upon his back, who assisted the doctor in his vocation. We were presently in the midst of the crowd, and soon afterward upon the stage; which the boy was persuaded to ascend, that by a sudden stroke of conjuration, a great quantity of gold might be conveyed under his hat. Under his hat, however, the dextrous but mischievous operator, having imperceptibly conveyed a rotten egg, clapped his hand smartly upon it, and shewed the aurum potabile running down on each side, to the unspeakable delight of the beholders, but to the great disappointment of the boy, and the total ruin of our community.

It is impossible to describe the confusion and distress which this accident instantly produced among us: we were at once buried in a quag, intolerably

noisome, and insuperably viscid: those who had been overturned in its passage, found it impossible to recover their situation; and the few who happening to lie near the borders of the suffusion, had with the utmost efforts of their strength crawled to those parts which it had not reached, laboured in vain to free themselves from shackles, which every moment became more strong as the substance which formed them grew more hard, and threatened in a short time totally to deprive them of all power of motion. I was myself among this number, and cannot even now recollect my situation without shuddering at my danger. In the mean time the candidate for enchanted gold, who in the search of pleasure had found only dirt and hunger, weariness and disappointment, reflecting that his stolen holiday was at an end, returned forlorn and disconsolate to his nurse. The nose of this good woman was soon offended by an unsavoury smell, and it was not long before she discovered whence it proceeded. A few questions, and a good thump on the back, brought the whole secret to light, and the delinquent, that he might be at once purified and punished, was carried to the next pump, where his head was held under the spout till he had received the discipline of a pickpocket. He was indeed very near being drowned; but his sufferings were nothing in comparison of ours. We were overwhelmed with a second inundation; the cataracts, which burst upon us with a noise tenfold more dreadful than thunder, swept us by hundreds before them, and the few that remained would not have had strength to keep their hold against the impetuosity of the torrent, if it had continued a few minutes longer. I was still among those that escaped; and after we had a little recovered from our fright, we found that if we had lost our friends, we were released from the

viscous distance which our own strength could never have broken. We were also delivered from the dread of an emigration and a famine; and taking comfort in these reflections, we were enabled to reconcile ourselves, without murmuring, to the fate of those who had perished.

But the series of misfortunes which I have been doomed to suffer, without respite, was now begun. The next day was Holy Thursday; and the stupendous being, who, without labour, carried the ruins of our state in procession to the bounds of his parish, thought fit to break his wand into a cudgel as soon as he came home. This he was impatient to use; and in an engagement with an adversary, who had armed himself with the like weapon, he received a stroke upon his head, by which my favourite wife and three children, the whole remains of my family, were crushed to atoms in a moment. I was myself so near as to be thrown down by the concussion of the blow; and the boy immediately scratching his head to alleviate the smart, was within a hair of destroying me with his nail.

I was so terrified at this accident that I crept down to the nape of his neck, where I continued all the rest of the day; and at night, when he retired to eat his crust of bread in the chimney-corner, I concluded that I should at least be safe till the morning, and therefore began my repast, which the dangers and misfortunes of the day had prevented. Whether having long fasted, my bite was more keen than usual, or whether I had made my attack in a more sensible part, I cannot tell; but the boy suddenly thrust up his fingers with so much speed and dexterity, that he laid hold of me, and aimed with all his force to throw me into the fire; in this savage attempt he would certainly have succeeded, if I had not stuck

between his finger and his nail, and fell short upon some linen that was hanging to dry.

The woman, who took in washing, was employed by a laundress of some distinction; and it happened that I had fallen on the shift sleeve of a celebrated toast, who frequently made her appearance at court. I concealed myself with great caution in the plaits, and the next night had the honour to accompany her into the drawing room, where she was surrounded by rival beauties, from whom she attracted every eye, and stood with the utmost composure of mind and countenance in the centre of admiration and desire. In this situation I became impatient of confinement, and after several efforts made my way out by her tucker, hoping to have passed on under her handkerchief to her head; but in this hope I was disappointed, for handkerchief she had none. I was not, however, willing to go back, and as my station was the principal object of the whole circle, I was soon discovered by those who stood near. They gazed at me with eager attention, and sometimes turned towards each other with very intelligent looks; but of this the lady took no notice, as it was the common effect of that profusion of beauty which she had been used to pour upon every eye; the emotion, however, at length encreased till she observed it, and glancing her eye downward with a secret exultation, she discovered the cause: pride instantly covered those cheeks with blushes which modesty had forsaken; and as I was now become sensible of my danger, I was hasting to retreat. At this instant a young nobleman, who perceived that the lady was become sensible of her disgrace, and who, perhaps, thought that it might be deemed an indecorum to approach the place were I stood with his hand in a public assembly, stooped down, and holding up his hat to his face, directed so

violent a blast towards me, from his mouth, that I vanished before it like an atom in a whirlwind: and the next moment found myself in the toupee of a battered beau, whose attention was engrossed by the window of a rich citizen, with whose plumb he hoped to pay his debts and procure a new mistress.

In this place the hair was so thin that it scarce afforded me shelter, except a single row of curls on each side, where the powder and grease were insuperable obstacles to my progress: here, however, I continued near a week, but it was in every respect a dreadful situation. I lived in perpetual solicitude and danger, secluded from my species, and exposed to the cursed claws of the valet, who persecuted me every morning and every night. In the morning, it was with the utmost difficulty that I escaped from being kneaded up in a lump of pomatum, or squeezed to death between the burning forceps of a crisping iron; and at night, after I had with the utmost vigilance and dexterity evaded the comb, I was still liable to be thrust through the body with a pin.

I frequently meditated my escape, and formed many projects to effect it, which I afterwards abandoned either as dangerous or impracticable. I observed that the valet had a much better head of hair than his master, and that he sometimes wore the same bag; into the bag, therefore, one evening, I descended with great circumspection, and was removed with it: nor was it long before my utmost expectations were answered, for the valet tied on my dormitory to his own hair the very next morning, and I gained a new settlement.

But the bag was not the only part of the master's dress which was occasionally appropriated by the servant, who being soon after my exploit detected in wearing a laced frock before it had been left off, was turned away at a minute's warning, and despairing

to obtain a character, returned to the occupation in which he had been bred, and became journeyman to a barber in the city, who, upon seeing a specimen of his skill to dress hair a-la-mode de la cour, was willing to receive him without a scrupulous examination of his morals.

This change in the situation of my patron was of great advantage to me; for I began to have more company and less disturbance. But among other persons whom he attended every morning to shave, was an elderly gentleman of great repute for natural knowledge, a fellow of many foreign societies, and a profound adept in experimental philosophy. This gentleman, having conceived a design to repeat Leuenhoek's experiments upon the increase of our species, inquired of the proprietor of my dwelling if he could help him to a subject. The man was at first startled at the question; but it was no sooner comprehended than he pulled out an ivory comb, and produced myself and two associates, one of whom died soon after of the hurt he received.

The sage received us with thanks, and very carefully conveyed us into his stocking, where, though it was not a situation perfectly agreeable to our nature, we produced a numerous progeny. Here, however, I suffered new calamity, and was exposed to new danger. The philosopher, whom a sedentary and recluse life had rendered extremely susceptible of cold, would often sit with his shins so near the fire, that we were almost scorched to death before we could get round to the calf for shelter. He was also subject to frequent abstractions of mind; and at these times many of us have been miserably destroyed by his broth or his tea, which he would hold so much on one side that it would run over the vessel, and overflow us with a scalding deluge from his knee to his ancle: nor was this all; for when he felt the

smart he would rub the part with his hand, without reflecting upon his nursery, till he had crushed great part of those who had escaped. Still, however, it was my fortune to survive for new adventures.

The philosopher, among other visitants whose curiosity he was pleased to gratify, was sometimes favoured with the company of ladies: for the entertainment of a lady it was my misfortune to be one morning taken from my family when I least suspected it, and secured in the apparatus of a solar microscope. After I had contributed to their astonishment and diversion near an hour, I was left with the utmost inhumanity and ingratitude to perish of hunger, immured between the two pieces of isinglass through which I had been exhibited. In this condition I remained three days and three nights; and should certainly have perished in the fourth, if a boy about seven years old, who was carelessly left alone in the room, had not poked his finger through the hole in which I was confined, and once more set me at liberty. I was, however, extremely weak, and the window being open I was blown into the street, and fell on the uncovered perriwig of a doctor of physic, who had just alighted to visit a patient. This was the first time I had ever entered a perriwig, a situation which I scarce less deprecate than the microscope: I found it a desolate wilderness, without inhabitants and without bounds. I continued to traverse it with incredible labour, but I knew not in what direction, and despaired of being ever restored either to food or rest. My spirits were at length exhausted, my gripe relaxed, and I fell almost in a state of insensibility from the verge of the labyrinth in which I had been bewildered, into the head of a patient in the hospital, over whom, after my fall, I could just perceive the doctor leaning to look at his tongue.

By the warmth and nourishment which this place

afforded me I soon revived. I rejoiced at my deliverance, and thought I had nothing to fear but the death of the patient in whose head I had taken shelter.

I was, however, soon convinced of my mistake; for among other patients in the same ward was a child about six years old, who having been put in for a rupture, had fallen into the jaundice: for this disease the nurse in the absence of the physician, prescribed a certain number of my species to be administered alive in a spoonful of milk. A collection was immediately made, and I was numbered among the unhappy victims which ignorance and inhumanity had thus devoted to destruction: I was immerged in the potion, and saw myself approach the horrid jaws that I expected would the next moment close over me; not but that, in this dreadful moment, I had some languid hope of passing the gulf unhurt, and finding a settlement at the bottom. My fate, however, was otherwise determined: for the child, in a fit of frowardness and anger, dashed the spoon out of the hand of the nurse; and after incredible fatigue, I recovered the station to which I had descended from the doctor's wig.

I was once more congratulating myself on an escape almost miraculous, when I was alarmed by the appearance of a barber, with all the dreadful apparatus of his trade. I soon found that the person whose head I had chosen for an asylum was become delirious, and that the hair was by the physician's order to be removed for a blister.

Here my courage totally failed, and all my hopes forsook me. It happened, however, that though I was entangled in the suds, yet I was deposited unhurt upon the operator's shaving cloth; from whence, as he was shaving you this night, I gained your shoulder, and have this moment crawled out from the plaits

of your stock, which you have just taken off and laid upon this table. Whether this event be fortunate or unfortunate, time only can discover: but I still hope to find some dwelling, where no comb shall ever enter, and no nails shall ever scratch; which neither pincers nor razors shall approach; where I shall pass the remainder of life in perfect security and repose, amidst the smiles of society and the profusion of plenty.

At this hope, so extravagant and ridiculous, uttered with such solemnity of diction and manner, I burst into a fit of immoderate laughter that awaked me: but my mirth was instantly repressed by reflecting, that the Life of Man is not less exposed to Evil; and that all his expectations of security and happiness in Temporal Possessions are equally chimerical and absurd.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

DORMITOR.

N° 122. SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1754.

Telephus & Peleus, cùm pauper & exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas & sesquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querelâ. HOR.

Tragedians too lay by their state to grieve:
Peleus and Telephus, exil'd and poor,
Forget their swelling and gigantic words:
He that would have spectators share his grief,
Must write not only well but movingly.
ROSCOMMON.

MADNESS being occasioned by a close and continued attention of the mind to a single object, Shakspeare judiciously represents the resignation of his crown to daughters so cruel and unnatural, as the particular idea which has brought on the distraction of Lear, and which perpetually recurs to his imagination, and mixes itself with all his ramblings. Full of this idea, therefore, he breaks out abruptly in the Fourth Act: 'No, they cannot touch me for coining: I am the king himself.' He believes himself to be raising recruits, and censures the inability and unskilfulness of some of his soldiers: 'There's your press money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace: this piece of toasted cheese will do it.' The art of our poet is transcendant in thus making a passage, that even borders on burlesque, strongly expressive of the madness he is painting. Lear

suddenly thinks himself in the field; 'there's my gauntlet—I'll prove it on a giant:' and that he has shot his arrow successfully! 'O well flown barb! i'th' clout, i'th' clout: hewgh! give the word.' He then recollects the falsehood and cruelty of his daughters, and breaks out in some pathetic reflections on his old age, and on the tempest to which he was so lately exposed: 'Ha! Gonerill, ha! Regan! They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had white hairs on my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say, ay, and no, to every thing that I said—ay and no too, was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they're not men of their words; they told me I was every thing: 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.' The impotence of royalty to exempt its possessor, more than the meanest subject, from suffering natural evils, is here finely hinted at.

His friend and adherent Glo'ster, having been lately deprived of sight, inquires if the voice he hears is not the voice of the king; Lear instantly catches the word, and replies with great quickness,

> ——Ay, every inch a king:
> When I do stare, see how the subject quakes!
> I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
> Adultery?, no thou shalt not die: die for adultery!

He then makes some very severe reflections on the hypocrisy of lewd and abandoned women, and adds, 'Fie, fie, fie; pah, pah; Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination;' and as every object seems to be present to the eyes of the lunatic, he thinks he pays for the drug: 'there's money for thee!' Very strong and

lively also is the imagery in a succeeding speech, where he thinks himself viewing his subjects punished by the proper officer:

> Thou rascal bedel, hold thy bloody hand:
> Why dost thou lash that whore? strip thy own back;
> Thou hast thy lust to use her in that kind
> For which thou whip'st her!

This circumstance leads him to reflect on the efficacy of rank and power, to conceal and palliate profligacy and injustice; and this fine satire is couched in two different metaphors, that are carried on with much propriety and elegance:

> Through tatter'd cloaths small vices do appear;
> Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
> And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
> Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

We are moved to find that Lear has some faint knowledge of his old and faithful courtier.

> If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes:
> I know thee well enough; thy name is Glo'ster.

The advice he then gives him is very affecting:

> Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
> Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air
> We wawle and cry——
> When we are born, we cry that we are come
> To this great stage of fools!

This tender complaint of the miseries of human life bears so exact a resemblance with the following passage of Lucretius, that I cannot forbear transcribing it:

> *Vagitûque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,*
> *Cui tantum in vitâ restet transire malorum.*
>
> Then with distressful cries he fills the room,
> Too sure presages of his future doom. DRYDEN.

It is not to be imagined that our author copied from the Roman; on such a subject it is almost impossible but that two persons of genius and sensibility must feel and think alike. Lear drops his moralities and meditates revenge:

> It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
> A troop of horse with felt. I'll put't in proof;
> And when I've stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
> Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.

The expedient is well suited to the character of a lunatic, and the frequent repetitions of the word 'kill,' forcibly represent his rage and desire of revenge, and must affect an intelligent audience at once with pity and terror. At this instant Cordelia sends one of her attendants to protect her father from the danger with which he is threatened by her sisters: the wretched king is so accustomed to misery, and so hopeless of succour, that when the messenger offers to lead him out, he imagines himself taken captive and mortally wounded:

> No rescue? what! a prisoner? I am e'en
> The nat'ral fool of fortune: use me well,
> You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;
> I am cut to the brain.———

Cordelia at length arrives; an opiate is administered to the king, to calm the agonies and agitations of his mind; and a most interesting interview ensues between this daughter, that was so unjustly suspected of disaffection, and the rash and mistaken father. Lear, during his slumber, has been arrayed in regal apparel, and is brought upon the stage in a chair, not recovered from his trance.

I know not a speech more truly pathetic than that of Cordelia when she first sees him:

> Had you not been their father, these white flakes
> Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face
> To be expos'd against the warring winds?

The dreadfulness of that night is expressed by a circumstance of great humanity; for which kind of strokes Shakspeare is as eminent as for his poetry:

> My very enemy's dog,
> Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
> Against my fire. And wast thou fain, poor father,
> To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
> In short and musty straw?——

Lear begins to awake; but his imagination is still distempered, and his pain exquisite;

> You do me wrong to take me out o'th' grave.
> Thou art a soul in bliss! but I am bound
> Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
> Do scald like molten lead——

When Cordelia in great affliction asks him if he knows her, he replies,

> You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?

This reply heightens her distress; but his sensibility beginning to return, she kneels to him, and begs his benediction. I hope I have no readers that can peruse his answer without tears:

> ——Pray do not mock me;
> I am a very foolish, fond old man,
> Fourscore and upward; and to deal plainly,
> I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
> Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
> Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
> What place this is.—Do not laugh at me;
> For as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.

The humility, calmness, and sedateness of this speech, opposed to the former rage and indignation of Lear, is finely calculated to excite commiseration. Struck with the remembrance of the injurious suspicion he had cherished against this favourite and fond daughter, the poor old man intreats her, 'not to weep,' and tells her, that 'if she has prepared poison for him, he is ready to drink it; for I know,' says he, 'you do not, you cannot love me, after my cruel usage of you: your sisters have done me much wrong, of which I have some faint remembrance; you have some cause to hate me, they have none.' Being told that he is not in France, but in his own kingdom, he answers hastily, and in connection with that leading idea which I have before insisted on, 'Do not abuse me'—and adds, with a meekness and contrition that are very pathetic, 'Pray now forget and forgive; I am old and foolish.'

Cordelia is at last slain: the lamentations of Lear are extremely tender and affecting; and this accident is so severe and intolerable, that it again deprived him of his intellect, which seemed to be returning.

His last speech, as he surveys the body, consists of such simple reflections as nature and sorrow dictate:

> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more;
> Never, never, never, never, never!——

The heaving and swelling of his heart is described by a most expressive circumstance:

> Pray you undo this button: Thank you, Sir,
> Do you see this? Look on her, look on her lips:
> Look there, look there—— [dies.

I shall transiently observe, in conclusion of these remarks, that this drama is chargeable with con-

siderable imperfections. The plot of Edmund against his brother, which distracts the attention, and destroys the unity of the fable; the cruel and horrid extinction of Gloster's eyes, which ought not to be exhibited on the stage; the utter improbability of Gloster's imagining, though blind, that he had leaped down Dover cliff; and some passages that are too turgid and full of strained metaphors; are faults which the warmest admirers of Shakspeare will find it difficult to excuse. I know not, also, whether the cruelty of the daughters is not painted with circumstances too savage and unnatural; for it is not sufficient to say, that this monstrous barbarity is founded on historical truth, if we recollect the just observation of Boileau,

Le vray peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.

Some truths may be too strong to be believed.

Z SOMES.

N° 123. TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1754.

——Jam proterva
Fronte petet Lalage maritum. HOR.

The maid whom now you court in vain,
Will quickly run in quest of man.

I HAVE before remarked, that 'to abstain from the appearance of evil,' is a precept in that law, which has every characteristic of Divinity; and I have, in more than one of these papers, endeavoured to enforce the practice of it, by an illustration of its excellence and importance.

Circumstances have been admitted as evidences of guilt, even when death has been the consequence of conviction; and a conduct by which evil is strongly implied, is little less pernicious than that by which it is expressed. With respect to society, as far as it can be influenced by example, the effect of both is the same; for every man encourages the practice of that vice which he commits in appearance, though he avoids it in fact: and with respect to the individual, as the esteem of the world is a motive to virtue only less powerful than the approbation of conscience, he who knows that he is already degraded by the imputation of guilt, will find himself half disarmed when he is assailed by temptation: and as he will have less to lose, he will, indeed, be less disposed to resist. Of the sex, whose levity is most likely to provoke censure, it is eminently true, that the loss of character by imprudence frequently induces the loss of virtue: the ladies, therefore, should be proportionably circumspect; as to those, in whom folly is most likely to terminate in guilt, it is certainly of most importance to be wise.

This subject has irresistibly obtruded itself upon my mind in the silent hour of meditation, because, as often as I have reviewed the scenes in which I have mixed among the busy and the gay, I have observed that a depravity of manners, a licentious extravagance of dress and behaviour, are become almost universal; virtue, seems ambitious of a resemblance to vice, as vice glories in the deformities which she has been used to hide.

A decent timidity and modest reserve have been always considered as auxiliaries to beauty; but an air of dissolute boldness is now affected by all who would be thought graceful or polite: chastity, which used to be discovered in every gesture and every

look, is now retired to the breast, and is found only by those who intend its destruction; as a general when the town is surrendered retreats to the citadel, which is always less capable of defence, when the outworks are possessed by the enemy.

There is now little apparent difference between the virgin and the prostitute: if they are not otherwise known, they may share the box and the drawing-room without distinction. The same fashion which takes away the veil of modesty, will necessarily conceal lewdness; and honour and shame will lose their influence, because they will no longer distinguish virtue from vice. General custom, perhaps, may be thought an effectual security against general censure; but it will not always lull the suspicions of jealousy; nor can it familiarize any beauty without destroying its influence, or diminish the prerogatives of a husband without weakening his attachment to his wife.

The excess of every mode may be declined without remarkable singularity; and the ladies, who should even dare to be singular in the present defection of taste, would proportionably increase their power and secure their happiness.

I know that in the vanity and the presumption of youth, it is common to allege the consciousness of innocence, as a reason for the contempt of censure; and a licence, not only for every freedom, but for every favour except the last. This confidence can, perhaps, only be repressed by a sense of danger: and as the persons whom I wish to warn, are most impatient of declamation, and most susceptible of pity, I will address them in a story; and I hope the events will not only illustrate but impress the precept which they contain.

Flavilla, just as she had entered her fourteenth year, was left an orphan to the care of her mother,

in such circumstances as disappointed all the hopes which her education had encouraged. Her father, who lived in great elegance upon the salary of a place at court, died suddenly without having made any provision for his family, except an annuity of one hundred pounds, which he had purchased for his wife with part of her marriage portion; nor was he possessed of any property, except the furniture of a large house in one of the new squares, an equipage, a few jewels, and some plate.

The greater part of the furniture and the equipage were sold to pay his debts; the jewels, which were not of great value, and some useful pieces of the plate, were reserved; and Flavilla removed with her mother into lodgings.

But notwithstanding this change in her circumstances, they did not immediately lose their rank. They were still visited by a numerous and polite acquaintance; and though some gratified their pride by assuming the appearance of pity, and rather insulted than alleviated their distress by the whine of condolence, and a minute comparison of what they had lost with what they possessed; yet from others they were continually receiving presents, which still enabled them to live with a genteel frugality; they were still considered as people of fashion, and treated by those of a lower class with distant respect.

Flavilla thus continued to move in a sphere to which she had no claim; she was perpetually surrounded with elegance and splendor, which the caprice of others, like the rod of an enchanter, could dissipate in a moment, and leave her to regret the loss of enjoyments, which she could neither hope to obtain nor cease to desire. Of this, however, Flavilla had no dread. She was remarkably tall for her age, and was celebrated not only for her beauty

but her wit: these qualifications she considered, not only as securing whatever she enjoyed by the favour of others, but as a pledge of possessing them in her own right by an advantageous marriage. Thus the vision that danced before her, derived stability from the very vanity which it flattered: and she had as little apprehension of distress, as diffidence of her own power to please.

There was a fashionable levity in her carriage and discourse, which her mother, who knew the danger of her situation, laboured to restrain, sometimes with anger, and sometimes with tears, but always without success. Flavilla was ever ready to answer, that she neither did or said any thing of which she had reason to be ashamed; and therefore did not know why she should be restrained, except in mere courtesy to envy, whom it was an honour to provoke, or to slander, whom it was a disgrace to fear. In proportion as Flavilla was more flattered and caressed, the influence of her mother became less: and though she always treated her with respect, from a point of good breeding, yet she secretly despised her maxims, and applauded her own conduct.

Flavilla at eighteen was a celebrated toast; and among other gay visitants who frequented her tea-table, was Clodio, a young baronet, who had just taken possession of his title and estate. There were many particulars in Clodio's behaviour, which encouraged Flavilla to hope that she should obtain him for a husband: but she suffered his assiduities with such apparent pleasure, and his familiarities with so little reserve, that he soon ventured to disclose his intention, and make her what he thought a very genteel proposal of another kind: but whatever were the artifices with which it was introduced, or the terms in which it was made, Flavilla rejected it with the

utmost indignation and disdain. Clodio, who, notwithstanding his youth, had long known and often practised the arts of seduction, gave way to the storm, threw himself at her feet, imputed his offence to the phrenzy of his passion, flattered her pride by the most abject submission of extravagant praise, intreated her pardon, aggravated his crime, but made no mention of atonement by marriage. This particular, which Flavilla did not fail to remark, ought to have determined her to admit him no more: but her vanity and her ambition were still predominant, she still hoped to succeed in her project, Clodio's offence was tacitly forgiven, his visits were permitted, his familiarities were again suffered, and his hopes revived. He had long entertained an opinion that she loved him, in which, however, it is probable, that his own vanity and her indiscretion concurred to deceive him; but this opinion, though it implied the strongest obligation to treat her with generosity and tenderness, only determined him again to attempt her ruin, as it encouraged him with a probability of success. Having, therefore, resolved to obtain her as a mistress, or at once to give her up, he thought he had little more to do, than to convince her that he had taken such a resolution, justify it by some plausible sophistry, and give her some time to deliberate upon a final determination. With this view, he went a short journey into the country; having put a letter into her hand at parting, in which he acquainted her, 'That he had often reflected, with inexpressible regret, upon her resentment of his conduct in a late instance; but that the delicacy and the ardour of his affection were insuperable obstacles to his marriage; that where there was no liberty, there could be no happiness: that he should become indifferent to the endearments of love, when they could no longer be distinguished from the officious-

ness of duty: that while they were happy in the possession of each other, it would be absurd to suppose they would part; and that if this happiness should cease, it would not only ensure but aggravate their misery to be inseparably united: that this event was less probable, in proportion as their cohabitation was voluntary; but that he would make such provision for her upon the contingency, as a wife would expect upon his death. He conjured her not to determine under the influence of prejudice and custom, but according to the laws of reason and nature. 'After mature deliberation,' said he, 'remember that the whole value of my life depends upon your will. I do not request an explicit consent, with whatever transport I might behold the lovely confusion which it might produce. I shall attend you in a few days, with the anxiety, though not with the guilt, of a criminal who waits for the decision of his judge. If my visit is admitted, we will never part; if it is rejected, I can see you no more.'

N° 124. SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 1754.

——— Incedis per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso. HOR.

With heedless feet on fires you go,
That hid in treacherous ashes glow.

FLAVILLA had too much understanding as well as virtue, to deliberate a moment upon this proposal. She gave immediate orders that Clodio should be

admitted no more. But his letter was a temptation to gratify her vanity, which she could not resist: she shewed it first to her mother and then to the whole circle of her female acquaintance, with all the exultation of a hero who exposes a vanquished enemy at the wheels of his chariot in a triumph; she considered it as an indisputable evidence of her virtue, as a reproof of all who had dared to censure the levity of her conduct, and a licence to continue it without apology or restraint.

It happened that Flavilla, soon after this accident, was seen in one of the boxes at the playhouse by Mercator, a young gentleman who had just returned from his first voyage as captain of a large ship in the Levant trade, which had been purchased for him by his father, whose fortune enabled him to make a genteel provision for five sons, of whom Mercator was the youngest, and who expected to share his estate, which was personal, in equal proportions at his death.

Mercator was captivated with her beauty, but discouraged by the splendor of her appearance, and the rank of her company. He was urged rather by curiosity than hope, to inquire who she was; and he soon gained such a knowledge of her circumstances, as relieved him from despair.

As he knew not how to get admission to her company, and had no design upon her virtue, he wrote in the first ardour of his passion to her mother; giving a faithful account of his fortune and dependence, and intreating that he might be permitted to visit Flavilla as a candidate for her affection. The old lady, after having made some inquiries, by which the account that Mercator had given her was confirmed, sent him an invitation, and received his first visit alone. She told him, that as Flavilla had no fortune, and as a considerable part of his own

was dependent upon his father's will, it would be extremely imprudent to endanger the disappointment of his expectations, by a marriage which would make it more necessary that they should be fulfilled; that he ought therefore to obtain his father's consent, before any other step was taken, lest he should be embarrassed by engagements which young persons almost insensibly contract, whose complacency in each other is continually gaining strength by frequent visits and conversation. To this counsel, so salutary and perplexing, Mercator was hesitating what to reply, when Flavilla came in, an accident which he was now only solicitous to improve. Flavilla was not displeased either with his person or his address; the frankness and gaiety of her disposition soon made him forget that he was a stranger: a conversation commenced, during which they became yet more pleased with each other; and having thus surmounted the difficulty of a first visit, he thought no more of the old lady, as he believed her auspices were not necessary to his success.

His visits were often repeated, and he became every hour more impatient of delay: he pressed his suit with that contagious ardour, which is caught at every glance, and produces the consent which it solicits. At the same time, indeed, a thought of his father would intervene; but being determined to gratify his wishes at all events, he concluded with a sagacity almost universal on these occasions, that of two evils, to marry without his consent was less, than to marry against it; and one evening, after the lovers had spent the afternoon by themselves, they went out in a kind of frolic, which Mercator had proposed in the vehemence of his passion, and to which Flavilla had consented in the giddiness of her indiscretion, and were married at May Fair.

In the first interval of recollection after this precipitate step, Mercator considered, that he ought to be the first who acquainted his father of the new alliance which had been made in his family: but as he had not fortitude enough to do it in person, he expressed it in the best terms he could conceive by a letter; and after such an apology for his conduct as he had been used to make to himself, he requested that he might be permitted to present his wife for the parental benediction, which alone was wanting to complete his felicity.

The old gentleman, whose character I cannot better express than in the fashionable phrase which has been contrived to palliate false principles and dissolute manners, had been a gay man, and was well acquainted with the town. He had often heard Flavilla toasted by rakes of quality, and had often seen her at public places. Her beauty and her dependence, the gaiety of her dress, the multitude of her admirers, the levity of her conduct, and all the circumstances of her situation, had concurred to render her character suspected; and he was disposed to judge of it with yet less charity, when she had offended him by marrying his son, whom he considered as disgraced and impoverished, and whose misfortune, as it was irretrievable, he resolved not to alleviate, but increase; a resolution, by which fathers, who have foolish and disobedient sons, usually display their own kindness and wisdom. As soon as he had read Mercator's letter, he cursed him for a fool, who had been gulled by the artifices of a strumpet to screen her from public infamy by fathering her children, and secure her from a prison by appropriating her debts. In an answer to his letter, which he wrote only to gratify his resentment, he told him, that 'if he had taken Flavilla into keeping, he would have overlooked it; and if her extravagance had distressed him, he would have satis-

fied his creditors; but that his marriage was not to be forgiven; that he should never have another shilling of his money; and that he was determined to see him no more.' Mercator, who was more provoked at this outrage than grieved at his loss, disdained to reply; and believing that he had now most reason to be offended, could not be persuaded to solicit a reconciliation.

He hired a genteel apartment for his wife of an upholsterer, who, with a view to let lodgings, had taken and furnished a large house near Leicester-fields, and in about two months left her to make another voyage.

He had received visits of congratulation from her numerous acquaintance, and had returned them as a pledge of his desire that they should be repeated. But a remembrance of the gay multitude, which while he was at home had flattered his vanity, as soon as he was absent alarmed his suspicion: he had, indeed, no particular cause of jealousy; but his anxiety arose merely from a sense of the temptation to which she was exposed, and the impossibility of his superintending her conduct.

In the mean time Flavilla continued to flutter round the same giddy circle, in which she had shone so long: the number of her visitants was rather increased than diminished, the gentlemen attended with yet greater assiduity, and she continued to encourage their civilities by the same indiscreet familiarity: she was one night at the masquerade, and another at an opera; sometimes at a rout, and sometimes rambling with a party of pleasure in short excursions from town; she came home sometimes at midnight, sometimes in the morning, and sometimes she was absent several nights together.

This conduct was the cause of much speculation and uneasiness to the good man and woman of the house. At first they suspected that Flavilla was no better than a woman of pleasure; and that the person

who had hired the lodging for her as his wife, and had disappeared upon pretence of a voyage to sea, had been employed to impose upon them, by concealing her character, in order to obtain such accommodation for her as she could not so easily have procured if it had been known; but as these suspicions made them watchful and inquisitive, they soon discovered, that many ladies by whom she was visited were of good character and fashion. Her conduct, however, supposing her to be a wife, was still inexcusable, and still endangered their credit and subsistence; hints were often dropped by the neighbours to the disadvantage of her character; and an elderly maiden lady, who lodged in the second floor, had given warning; the family was disturbed at all hours in the night, and the door was crowded all day with messengers and visitants to Flavilla.

One day, therefore, the good woman took an opportunity to remonstrate, though in the most distant and respectful terms, and with the utmost diffidence and caution. She told Flavilla, 'that she was a fine young lady, that her husband was abroad, that she kept a great deal of company, and that the world was censorious; she wished that less occasion for scandal was given; and hoped to be excused the liberty she had taken, as she might be ruined by those slanders which could have no influence upon the great, and which, therefore, they were not solicitous to avoid.' This address, however ambiguous, and however gentle, was easily understood and fiercely resented. Flavilla, proud of her virtue, and impatient of controul, would have despised the counsel of a philosopher, if it had implied an impeachment of her conduct; before a person so much her inferior, therefore, she was under no restraint; she answered, with a mixture of contempt and indignation, that 'those only who did not know her would dare to take any liberty with

her character; and warned her to propagate no scandalous report at her peril.'

Flavilla immediately rose from her seat, and the woman departed without reply, though she was scarce less offended than her lodger, and from that moment she determined when Mercator returned to give him warning.

Mercator's voyage was prosperous; and after an absence of about ten months he came back. The woman, to whom her husband left the whole management of her lodgings, and who persisted in her purpose, soon found an opportunity to put it in execution. Mercator, as his part of the contract had been punctually fulfilled, thought he had some cause to be offended, and insisted to know her reasons for compelling him to leave her house. These his hostess, who was indeed a friendly woman, was very unwilling to give; and as he perceived that she evaded his question, he became more solicitous to obtain an answer. After much hesitation, which perhaps had a worse effect than any tale which malice could have invented, she told him, that 'Madam kept a great deal of company, and often staid out very late; that she had always been used to quiet and regularity; and was determined to let her apartment to some person in a more private station.'

At this account Mercator changed countenance; for he inferred from it just as much more than truth, as he believed it to be less. After some moments of suspence, he conjured her to conceal nothing from him, with an emotion which convinced her that she had already said too much. She then assured him, that 'he had no reason to be alarmed; for that she had no exception to his lady, but those gaieties which her station and the fashion sufficiently authorized.' Mercator's suspicions, however, were not wholly removed; and he began to think he had found a confidante whom it

would be his interest to trust: he, therefore, in the folly of his jealousy, confessed, 'that he had some doubts concerning his wife, which it was of the utmost importance to his honour and his peace to resolve; he entreated that he might continue in the apartment another year: that, as he should again leave the kingdom in a short time, she would suffer no incident, which might confirm either his hopes or his fears, to escape her notice in his absence; and that at his return she would give him such an account as would at least deliver him from the torment of suspence, and determine his future conduct.'

There is no sophistry more general than that by which we justify a busy and scrupulous inquiry after secrets, which to discover is to be wretched without hope of redress; and no service to which others are so easily engaged as to assist in the search. To communicate suspicions of matrimonial infidelity, especially to a husband, is, by a strange mixture of folly and malignity, deemed not only an act of justice but of friendship; though it is too late to prevent an evil, which, whatever be its guilt, can diffuse wretchedness only in proportion as it is known. It is no wonder, therefore, that the general kindness of Mercator's confidante was on this occasion overborne; she was flattered by the trust that had been placed in her, and the power with which she was invested; she consented to Mercator's proposal, and promised that she would with the utmost fidelity execute her commission.

Mercator, however, concealed his suspicions from his wife; and, indeed, in her presence they were forgotten. Her manner of life he began seriously to disapprove; but being well acquainted with her temper, in which great sweetness was blended with a high spirit, he would not embitter the pleasure of a short stay by altercation, chiding and tears: but when her mind was melted into tenderness at his departure,

he clasped her in an extacy of fondness to his bosom, and intreated her to behave with reserve and circumspection; 'because,' said he, 'I know that my father keeps a watchful eye upon your conduct, which may, therefore, confirm or remove his displeasure, and either intercept or bestow such an increase of my fortune as will prevent the pangs of separation which must otherwise so often return, and in a short time unite us to part no more.' To this caution she had then no power to reply; and they parted with mutual protestations of unalterable love.

N° 125. TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1754.

——— Uxorem, Postume, ducis?
Dic qua Tisiphone, quibus exagitare colubris? JUV.

A sober man, like thee, to change his life!
What fury could possess thee with a wife? DRYDEN.

FLAVILLA, soon after she was thus left in a kind of widowhood a second time, found herself with child; and within somewhat less than eight months after Mercator's return from his first voyage, she happened to stumble as she was going up stairs, and being immediately taken ill was brought to bed before the next morning. The child, though its birth had been precipitated more than a month, was not remarkably small, nor had any infirmity which endangered its life.

It was now necessary, that the vigils of whist and the tumults of balls and visits should, for a while, be suspended; and in this interval of languor and retirement Flavilla first became thoughtful. She often reflected upon Mercator's caution when they last parted, which had made an indelible impression upon her mind, though it had produced no alteration in her conduct: notwithstanding the manner in which it was expressed, and the reason upon which it was founded, she began to fear that it might have been secretly prompted by jealousy,

The birth, therefore, of her first child in his absence, at a time when, if it had not been premature, it could not possibly have been his, was an accident which greatly alarmed her: but there was yet another, for which it was still less in her power to account, and which, therefore, alarmed her still more.

It happened that some civilities which she received from a lady who sat next her at an opera, and whom she had never seen before, introduced a conversation, which so much delighted her, that she gave her a pressing invitation to visit her: this invitation was accepted, and in a few days the visit was paid. Flavilla was not less pleased at the second interview, than she had been at the first; and without making any other inquiry concerning the lady than where she lived, took the first opportunity to wait on her. The apartment in which she was received was the ground floor of an elegant house, at a small distance from St. James's. It happened that Flavilla was placed near the window; and a party of the horse-guards riding through the street, she expected to see some of the royal family, and hastily threw up the sash. A gentleman who was passing by at the same instant, turned about at the noise of the window, and Flavilla no sooner saw his face than she knew him to be the father of Mercator. After looking first stedfastly at her, and then glancing his eye at the lady whom she was visiting, he affected a contemptuous sneer and went on. Flavilla, who had been thrown into some confusion, by the sudden and unexpected sight of a person, whom she knew considered her as the disgrace of his family and the ruin of his child, now changed countenance, and hastily retired to another part of the room: she was touched both with grief and anger at this silent insult, of which, however, she did not then suspect the cause.

It is, indeed, probable, that the father of Mercator would no where have looked upon her with complacency; but as soon as he saw her companion, he recollected that she was the favourite mistress of an old courtier, and that this was the house in which he kept her in great splendour, though she had been by turns a prostitute to many others. It happened that Flavilla, soon after this accident, discovered the character of her new acquaintance; and never remembered by whom she had been seen in her company, without the utmost regret and apprehension.

She now resolved to move in a less circle, and with more circumspection. In the mean time her little boy, whom she suckled, grew very fast; and it could no longer be known by his appearance, that he had been born too soon. His mother frequently gazed at him till her eyes overflowed with tears; and though her pleasures were now become domestic, yet she feared lest that which had produced should destroy them. After much deliberation, she determined that she would conceal the child's age from its father; believing it prudent to prevent a suspicion, which, however ill-founded, it might be difficult to remove, as her justification would depend wholly upon the testimony of her dependents: and her mother's and her own would necessarily become doubtful, when every one would have reason to conclude, that it would still have been the same supposing the contrary to have been true.

Such was the state of Flavilla's mind, and her little boy was six months old, when Mercator returned. She received him with joy, indeed, but it was mixed with a visible confusion; their meeting was more tender, but on her part it was less chearful; she smiled with inexpressible complacency, but at the same time the tears gushed from her eyes, and

she was seized with an universal tremor. Mercator caught the infection; and caressed first his Flavilla, and then his boy, with an excess of fondness and delight that before he had never expressed. The sight of the child made him more than ever wish a reconciliation with his father; and having heard, at his first landing, that he was dangerously ill, he determined to go immediately and attempt to see him, promising that he would return to supper. He had, in the midst of his caresses, more than once inquired the age of his son, but the question had been always evaded; of which, however, he took no notice, nor did it produce any suspicion.

He was now hastening to inquire after his father; but as he passed through the hall, he was officiously laid hold of by his landlady. He was not much disposed to inquire how she had fulfilled his charge; but perceiving by her looks that she had something to communicate, which was at least in her own opinion of importance, he suffered her to take him into her parlour. She immediately shut the door, and reminded him, that she had undertaken an office with reluctance which he had pressed upon her; and that she had done nothing in it to which he had not bound her by a promise; that she was extremely sorry to communicate her discoveries; but that he was a worthy gentleman, and, indeed, ought to know them. She then told him, 'that the child was born within less than eight months after his last return from abroad; that it was said to have come before its time, but that having pressed to see it she was refused.' This indeed, was true, and confirmed the good woman in her suspicion; for Flavilla, who had still resented the freedom which she had taken in her remonstrance, had kept her at a great distance: and the servants, to gratify the

mistress, treated her with the utmost insolence and contempt.

At this relation Mercator turned pale. He now recollected, that his question concerning the child's birth had been evaded; and concluded, that he had been shedding tears of tenderness and joy over a strumpet and a bastard, who had robbed him of his patrimony, his honour, and his peace. He started up with the furious wildness of sudden phrenzy; but she with great difficulty prevailed upon him not to leave the room. He sat down and remained some time motionless, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and his hands locked in each other. In proportion as he believed his wife to be guilty, his tenderness for his father revived; and he resolved, with yet greater zeal, to prosecute his purpose of immediately attempting a reconciliation.

In this state of confusion and distress, he went to the house; where he learned that his father had died early in the morning, and that his relations were then assembled to read his will. Fulvius, a brother of Mercator's mother, with whom he had always been a favourite, happening to pass from one room to another, heard his voice. He accosted him with great ardour of friendship; and, soothing him with expressions of condolence and affection, insisted to introduce him to the company. Mercator tacitly consented: he was received at least with civility by his brothers, and sitting down among them the will was read. He seemed to listen like the rest; but was, indeed, musing over the story which he had just heard, and lost in the speculation of his own wretchedness. He waked as from a dream, when the voice of the person who had been reading was suspended; and finding that he could no longer contain himself, he started up and would have left the company.

Of the will which had been read before him, he knew nothing: but his uncle believing that he was moved with grief and resentment at the manner in which he had been mentioned in it, and the bequest only of a shilling, took him into another room; and, to apologize for his father's unkindness, told him, that 'the resentment which he expressed at his marriage, was every day increased by the conduct of his wife, whose character was now become notoriously infamous;' for that she had been seen at the lodgings of a known prostitute, with whom she appeared to be well acquainted.' This account threw Mercator into another agony; from which he was, however, at length recovered by his uncle, who, as the only expedient by which he could retrieve his misfortune and sooth his distress, proposed that he should no more return to his lodgings, but go home with him; and that he would himself take such measures with his wife, as could scarce fail of inducing her to accept a separate maintenance, assume another name, and trouble him no more. Mercator, in the bitterness of his affliction, consented to this proposal, and they went away together.

Mercator, in the mean time, was expected by Flavilla with the most tender impatience. She had put her little boy to bed, and decorated a small room in which they had been used to sup by themselves, and which she had shut up in his absence; she counted the moments as they passed, and listened to every carriage and every step that she heard. Supper now was ready: her impatience was increased; terror was at length mingled with regret, and her fondness was only busied to afflict her: she wished, she feared, she accused, she apologized, and she wept. In the height of these eager expectations and this tender distress,

she received a billet which Mercator had been persuaded by his uncle to write, in which he upbraided her in the strongest terms, with abusing his confidence and dishonouring his bed; 'of this,' he said, 'he had now obtained sufficient proof to do justice to himself, and that he was determined to see her no more.'

To those, whose hearts have not already acquainted them with the agony which seized Flavilla, upon the sight of this billet, all attempts to describe it would be not only ineffectual but absurd. Having passed the night without sleep, and the next day without food, disappointed in every attempt to discover what was become of Mercator, and doubting if she should have found him, whether it would be possible to convince him of her innocence; the violent agitation of her mind produced a slow fever, which, before she considered it as a disease, she communicated to the child while she cherished it at her bosom, and wept over it as an orphan, whose life she was sustaining with her own.

After Mercator had been absent about ten days, his uncle, having persuaded him to accompany some friends to a country-seat at the distance of near sixty miles, went to his lodgings in order to discharge the rent, and try what terms he could make with Flavilla, whom he hoped to intimidate with threats of a prosecution and divorce; but when he came, he found that Flavilla was sinking very fast under her disease, and that the child was dead already. The woman of the house, into whose hands she had just put her repeating watch and some other ornaments as a security for her rent, was so touched with her distress, and so firmly persuaded of her innocence by the manner in which she had addressed her, and the calm solemnity with which she absolved those by whom she had been traduced, that as soon as the

had discovered Fulvius's business, she threw herself on her knees, and intreated, that if he knew where Mercator was to be found, he would urge him to return, that if possible the life of Flavilla might be preserved, and the happiness of both be restored by her justification. Fulvius, who still suspected appearances, or at least was in doubt of the cause that had produced them, would not discover his nephew; but after much entreaty and expostulation at last engaged upon his honour for the conveyance of a letter. The woman, as soon as she had obtained this promise, ran up and communicated it to Flavilla; who, when she had recovered from the surprize and tumult which it occasioned, was supported in her bed, and in about half an hour, after many efforts and many intervals, wrote a short billet; which was sealed and put into the hands of Fulvius.

Fulvius immediately inclosed and dispatched it by the post, resolving that in a question so doubtful and of such importance, he would no further interpose. Mercator, who the moment he cast his eye upon the letter knew both the hand and seal, after pausing a few moments in suspense, at length tore it open, and read these words:

'Such has been my folly, that, perhaps, I should not be acquitted of guilt in any circumstances, but those in which I write. I do not, therefore, but for your sake, wish them other than they are. The dear infant, whose birth has undone me, now lies dead at my side, a victim to my indiscretion and your resentment. I am scarce able to guide my pen. But I most earnestly entreat to see you, that you may at least have the satisfaction to hear me attest my innocence with the last sigh, and seal our reconciliation on my lips while they are yet sensible of the impression.'

Mercator, whom an earthquake would less have affected than this letter, felt all his tenderness revive in a moment, and reflected with unutterable anguish upon the rashness of his resentment. At the thought of his distance from London, he started as if he had felt a dagger in his heart: he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, with a look that expressed at once an accusation of himself, and a petition for her; and then rushing out of the house, without taking leave of any, or ordering a servant to attend him, he took post horses at a neighbouring inn, and in less than six hours was in Leicester-fields. But notwithstanding his speed, he arrived too late; Flavilla had suffered the last agony, and her eyes could behold him no more. Grief and disappointment, remorse and despair, now totally subverted his reason. It became necessary to remove him by force from the body; and after a confinement of two years in a mad-house he died.

May every lady, on whose memory compassion shall record these events, tremble to assume the levity of Flavilla; for, perhaps, it is in the power of no man, in Mercator's circumstances, to be less jealous than Mercator.

N° 126. SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 1754.

——Steriles hic legit arenas
Ut caneret paucis, mersitque hoc pulvere verum. LUCAN.

Canst thou believe the vast eternal Mind
Was e'er to Syrts and Lybian sands confin'd?
That he would chuse this waste, this barren ground,
To teach the thin inhabitants around,
And leave his truth in wilds and desarts drown'd?

THERE has always prevailed among that part of mankind that addict their minds to speculation, a propensity to talk much of the delights of retirement; and some of the most pleasing compositions produced in every age contain descriptions of the peace and happiness of a country life.

I know not whether those who thus ambitiously repeat the praises of solitude, have always considered, how much they depreciate mankind by declaring, that whatever is excellent or desirable is to be obtained by departing from them; that the assistance which we may derive from one another, is not equivalent to the evils which we have to fear; that the kindness of a few is overbalanced by the malice of many; and that the protection of society is too dearly purchased, by encountering its dangers and enduring its oppressions.

These specious representations of solitary happiness, however opprobrious to human nature, have so far spread their influence over the world,

that almost every man delights his imagination with the hopes of obtaining some time an opportunity of retreat. Many, indeed, who enjoy retreat only in imagination, content themselves with believing, that another year will transport them to rural tranquillity, and die while they talk of doing what, if they had lived longer, they would never have done. But many likewise there are, either of greater resolution or more credulity, who in earnest try the state which they have been taught to think thus secure from cares and dangers; and retire to privacy, either that they may improve their happiness, increase their knowledge, or exalt their virtue.

The greater part of the admirers of solitude, as of all other classes of mankind, have no higher or remoter view, than the present gratification of their passions. Of these some, haughty and impetuous, fly from society only because they cannot bear to repay to others the regard which themselves exact; and think no state of life eligible, but that which places them out of the reach of censure or controul, and affords them opportunities of living in a perpetual compliance with their own inclinations, without the necessity of regulating their actions by any other other man's convenience or opinion.

There are others of minds more delicate and tender, easily offended by every deviation from rectitude, soon disgusted by ignorance or impertinence, and always expecting from the conversation of mankind more elegance, purity, and truth, than the mingled mass of life will easily afford. Such men are in haste to retire from grossness, falsehood, and brutality; and hope to find in private habitations at least a negative felicity, an exemption from the shocks and perturbations with which public scenes are continually distressing them.

To neither of these votaries will solitude afford that content, which she has been taught so lavishly to promise. The man of arrogance will quickly discover, that by escaping from his opponents he has lost his flatterers, that greatness is nothing where it is not seen, and power nothing where it cannot be felt: and he, whose faculties are employed in too close an observation of failings and defects, will find his condition very little mended by transferring his attention from others to himself; he will probably soon come back in quest of new objects, and be glad to keep his captiousness employed on any character rather than his own.

Others are seduced into solitude merely by the authority of great names, and expect to find those charms in tranquillity which have allured statesmen and conquerors to the shades: these likewise are apt to wonder at their disappointment, for want of considering, that those whom they aspire to imitate carried with them to their country seats minds full fraught with subjects of reflection, the consciousness of great merit, the memory of illustrious actions, the knowledge of important events, and the seeds of mighty designs to be ripened by future meditation. Solitude was to such men a release from fatigue, and an opportunity of usefulness. But what can retirement confer upon him, who having done nothing, can receive no support from his own importance, who having known nothing, can find no entertainment in reviewing the past, and who intending nothing, can form no hopes from prospects of the future; he can, surely, take no wiser course than that of losing himself again in the crowd, and filling the vacuities of his mind with the news of the day.

Others consider solitude as the parent of philosophy, and retire in expectation of greater inti-

macies with science, as Numa repaired to the groves when he conferred with Egeria. These men have not always reason to repent. Some studies require a continued prosecution of the same train of thought, such as is too often interrupted by the petty avocations of common life: sometimes, likewise, it is necessary, that a multiplicity of objects be at once present to the mind; and every thing, therefore, must be kept at a distance, which may perplex the memory, or dissipate the attention.

But though learning may be conferred by solitude, its application must be attained by general converse. He has learned to no purpose that is not able to teach; and he will always teach unsuccessfully, who cannot recommend his sentiments by his diction or address.

Even the acquisition of knowledge is often much facilitated by the advantages of society: he that never compares his notions with those of others, readily acquiesces in his first thoughts, and very seldom discovers the objections which may be raised against his opinions; he, therefore, often thinks himself in possession of truth, when he is only fondling an error long since exploded. He that has neither companions nor rivals in his studies, will always applaud his own progress, and think highly of his performances, because he knows not that others have equalled or excelled him. And I am afraid it may be added, that the student who withdraws himself from the world, will soon feel that ardour extinguished which praise or emulation had enkindled, and take the advantage of secrecy to sleep, rather than to labour.

There remains yet another set of recluses, whose intention entitles them to higher respect, and whose motives deserve a more serious consideration. These retire from the world, not merely to bask in

ease or gratify curiosity; but that being disengaged from common cares, they may employ more time in the duties of religion: that they may regulate their actions with stricter vigilance, and purify their thoughts by more frequent meditation.

To men thus elevated above the mists of mortality, I am far from presuming myself qualified to give directions. On him that appears 'to pass through things temporal,' with no other care than 'not to lose finally the things eternal,' I look with such veneration as inclines me to approve his conduct in the whole, without a minute examination of its parts; yet I could never forbear to wish, that while vice is every day multiplying seducements, and stalking forth with more hardened effrontery, virtue would not withdraw the influence of her presence, or forbear to assert her natural dignity by open and undaunted perseverance in the right. Piety practised in solitude, like the flower that blooms in the desart, may give its fragrance to the winds of heaven, and delight those unbodied spirits that survey the works of God and the actions of men; but it bestows no assistance upon earthly beings, and however free from taints of impurity, yet wants the sacred splendour of beneficence.

Our Maker, who, though he gave us such varieties of temper and such difference of powers, yet designed us all for happiness, undoubtedly intended that we should obtain that happiness by different means. Some are unable to resist the temptations of importunity, or the impetuosity of their own passions incited by the force of present temptations: of these it is undoubtedly the duty to fly from enemies which they cannot conquer, and to cultivate, in the calm of solitude, that virtue which is too tender to endure the tempests of public life. But there are others, whose passions grow more

strong and irregular in privacy; and who cannot maintain an uniform tenor of virtue, but by exposing their manners to the public eye, and assisting the admonitions of conscience with the fear of infamy: for such it is dangerous to exclude all witnesses of their conduct, till they have formed strong habits of virtue, and weakened their passions by frequent victories. But there is a higher order of men so inspired with ardour, and so fortified with resolution, that the world passes before them without influence or regard: these ought to consider themselves as appointed the guardians of mankind: they are placed in an evil world, to exhibit public examples of good life; and may be said, when they withdraw to solitude, to desert the station which Providence assigned them.

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N° 127. TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1754.

——*Veteres ita miratur, laudatque!*—— HOR.

'The wits of old he praises and admires.

'It is very remarkable,' says Addison, 'that notwithstanding we fall short at present of the ancients in poetry, painting, oratory, history, architecture, and all the noble arts and sciences which depend more upon genius than experience; we exceed them as much in doggerel, humour, burlesque, and all the trivial arts of ridicule.' As this fine observation stands at present only in the form

of a general assertion, it deserves I think to be examined by a deduction of particulars, and confirmed by an allegation of examples, which may furnish an agreeable entertainment to those who have ability and inclination to remark the revolutions of human wit.

That Tasso, Ariosto, and Camoens, the three most celebrated of modern Epic Poets, are infinitely excelled in propriety of design, of sentiment and style, by Homer and Virgil, it would be serious trifling to attempt to prove: but Milton, perhaps, will not so easily resign his claim to equality, if not to superiority. Let it, however, be remembered, that if Milton be enabled to dispute the prize with the great champions of antiquity, it is entirely owing to the sublime conceptions he has copied from the Book of God. These, therefore, must be taken away, before we begin to make a just estimate of his genius; and from what remains, it cannot, I presume, be said, with candour and impartiality, that he has excelled Homer, in the sublimity and variety of his thoughts, or the strength and majesty of his diction.

Shakspeare, Corneille, and Racine, are the only modern writers of Tragedy, that we can venture to oppose to Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The first is an author so uncommon and eccentric, that we can scarcely try him by dramatic rules. In strokes of nature and character, he yields not to the Greeks: in all other circumstances that constitute the excellence of the drama, he is vastly inferior. Of the three moderns, the most faultless is the tender and exact Racine: but he was ever ready to acknowledge, that his capital beauties were borrowed from his favourite Euripides: which, indeed, cannot escape the observation of those who read with attention his Phædra and Andromache. The

pompous and truly Roman sentiments of Corneille are chiefly drawn from Lucan and Tacitus; the former of whom, by a strange perversion of taste, he is known to have preferred to Virgil. His diction is not so pure and mellifluous, his characters not so various and just, nor his plots so regular, so interesting and simple, as those of his pathetic rival. It is by this simplicity of fable alone, when every single act, and scene, and speech, and sentiment and word, concur to accelerate the intended event, that the Greek tragedies kept the attention of the audience immoveably fixed upon one principal object, which must be necessarily lessened, and the ends of the drama defeated, by the mazes and intricacies of modern plots.

The assertion of Addison with respect to the first particular, regarding the higher kinds of poetry, will remain unquestionably true, till nature in some distant age, for in the present enervated with luxury, she seems incapable of such an effort, shall produce some transcendant genius, of power to eclipse the Iliad and the Edipus.

The superiority of the ancient artists in Painting, is not perhaps so clearly manifest. They were ignorant, it will be said, of light, of shade, and perspective; and they had not the use of oil colours, which are happily calculated to blend and unite without harshness and discordance, to give a boldness and relief to the figures, and to form those middle Teints which render every well-wrought piece a closer resemblance of nature. Judges of the truest taste do, however, place the merit of colouring far below that of justness of design, and force of expression. In these two highest and most important excellencies the ancient painters were eminently skilled, if we trust the testimonies of Pliny, Quintilian, and Lucian; and to credit them we are

obliged, if we would form to ourselves any idea of these artists at all; for there is not one Grecian picture remaining: and the Romans, some few of whose works have descended to this age, could never boast of a Parrhasius or Apelles, a Zeuxis, Timanthes, or Protogenes, of whose performances the two accomplished critics above mentioned speak in terms of rapture and admiration. The statues that have escaped the ravages of time, as the Hercules and Laocoon for instance, are still a stronger demonstration of the power of the Grecian artists in expressing the passions; for what was executed in marble, we have presumptive evidence to think, might also have been executed in colours. Carlo Marat, the last valuable painter of Italy, after copying the head of the Venus in the Medicean collection three hundred times, generously confessed, that he could not arrive at half the grace and perfection of his model. But to speak my opinion freely on a very disputable point, I must own, that if the moderns approach the ancients in any of the arts here in question, they approach them nearest in The Art of Painting. The human mind can with difficulty conceive any thing more exalted, than 'The Last Judgment' of Michael Angelo, and 'The Transfiguration' of Raphael. What can be more animated than Raphael's 'Paul preaching at Athens?' What more tender and delicate than Mary holding the child Jesus, in his famous 'Holy Family?' What more graceful than 'The Aurora' of Guido?' What more deeply moving than 'The Massacre of the Innocents' by Le Brun?

But no modern Orator can dare to enter the lists with Demosthenes and Tully. We have discourses, indeed, that may be admired for their perspicuity, purity, and elegance; but can produce none that abound in a sublime which whirls away the audience

like a mighty torrent, and pierces the inmost recesses of his heart like a flash of lightning; which irresistibly and instantaneously convinces, without leaving him leisure to weigh the motives of conviction. The sermons of Bourdaloüe, the funeral orations of Bossuet, particularly that on the death of Henrietta, and the pleadings of Pelisson for his disgraced patron Fouquet, are the only pieces of eloquence I can recollect, that bear any resemblance to the Greek or Roman orator; for in England we have been particularly unfortunate in our attempts to be eloquent, whether in parliament, in the pulpit, or at the bar. If it be urged, that the nature of modern politics and laws excludes the pathetic and the sublime, and confines the speaker to a cold argumentative method, and a dull detail of proof and dry matters of fact; yet, surely, the Religion of the moderns abounds in topics so incomparably noble and exalted, as might kindle the flames of genuine oratory in the most frigid and barren genius: much more might this success be reasonably expected from such geniuses as Britain can enumerate; yet no piece of this sort, worthy applause or notice, has ever yet appeared.

The few, even among professed scholars, that are able to read the ancient Historians in their inimitable originals, are startled at the paradox of Bolingbroke, who boldly prefers Guicciardini to Thucydides; that is, the most verbose and tedious to the most comprehensive and concise of writers, and a collector of facts to one who was himself an eye-witness and a principal actor in the important story he relates. And, indeed, it may well be presumed, that the ancient histories exceed the modern from this single consideration, that the latter are commonly compiled by recluse scholars, unpractised in business, war, and politics; whilst the former are many of them written by ministers, commanders, and princes themselves. We have, indeed,

a few flimsy memoirs, particularly in a neighbouring nation, written by persons deeply interested in the transactions they describe; but these I imagine will not be compared to 'The retreat of the ten thousand' which Xenophon himself conducted and related, nor to 'The Gallic War' of Cæsar, nor 'The precious fragments' of Polybius, which our modern generals and ministers would not be discredited by diligently perusing, and making them the models of their conduct as well as of their style. Are the reflections of Machiavel so subtle and refined as those of Tacitus? Are the portraits of Thuanus so strong and expressive as those of Sallust and Plutarch? Are the narrations of Davila so lively and animated, or do his sentiments breathe such a love of liberty and virtue, as those of Livy and Herodotus?

The supreme excellence of the ancient Architecture, the last particular to be touched, I shall not enlarge upon, because it has never once been called in question, and because it is abundantly testified by the awful ruins of amphi-theatres, aqueducts, arches, and columns, that are the daily objects of veneration, though not of imitation. This art, it is observable, has never been improved in later ages in one single instance; but every just and legitimate edifice is still formed according to the five old established orders, to which human wit has never been able to add a sixth of equal symmetry and strength.

Such, therefore, are the triumphs of the Ancients, especially the Greeks, over the Moderns. They may, perhaps, be not unjustly ascribed to a genial climate, that gave such a happy temperament of body as was most proper to produce fine sensations; to a language most harmonious, copious, and forcible; to the public encouragements and honours bestowed on the cultivators of literature; to the emulation excited among the generous youth, by exhibitions of their perform-

ances at the solemn games; to their inattention to the arts of lucre and commerce, which engross and debase the minds of the moderns; and above all, to an exemption from the necessity of overloading their natural faculties with learning and languages, with which we in these later times are obliged to qualify ourselves for writers, if we expect to be read.

It is said by Voltaire, with his usual liveliness, 'We shall never again behold the time, when a Duke de la Rochefoucault might go from the conversation of a Pascal or Arnauld, to the theatre of Corneille.' This reflection may be more justly applied to the ancients, and it may with much greater truth be said; 'The age will never again return, when a Pericles, after walking with Plato in a portico built by Phidias, and painted by Apelles, might repair to hear a pleading of Demosthenes, or a tragedy of Sophocles.'

I shall next examine the other part of Addison's assertion, that the moderns excel the ancients in all the arts of Ridicule, and assign the reasons of this supposed excellence.

Z

N° 128. SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 1754.

Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit; unus utrique
Error, sed variis illudit partibus. HOR.

When in a wood we leave the certain way,
One error fools us, though we various stray,
Some to the left, and some to t'other side. FRANCIS.

It is common among all the classes of mankind, to charge each other with trifling away life: every man looks on the occupation or amusement of his neighbour, as something below the dignity of our nature, and unworthy of the attention of a rational being.

A man who considers the paucity of the wants of nature, and who, being acquainted with the various means by which all manual occupations are now facilitated, observes what numbers are supported by the labour of a few, would, indeed, be inclined to wonder, how the multitudes who are exempted from the necessity of working either for themselves or others, find business to fill up the vacuities of life. The greater part of mankind neither card the fleece, dig the mine, fell the wood, nor gather in the harvest; they neither tend herds nor build houses; in what then are they employed?

This is certainly a question, which a distant prospect of the world will not enable us to answer. We find all ranks and ages mingled together in a tumultuous confusion with haste in their motions, and eagerness in their looks; but what they have to

pursue or avoid, a more minute observation must inform them.

When we analyse the crowd into individuals, it soon appears that the passions and imaginations of men will not easily suffer them to be idle: we see things coveted merely because they are rare, and pursued because they are fugitive; we see men conspire to fix an arbitrary value on that which is worthless in itself, and then contend for the possession. One is a collector of fossils, of which he knows no other use than to shew them; and when he has stocked his own repository, grieves that the stones which he has left behind him should be picked up by another. The florist nurses a tulip, and repines that his rival's beds enjoy the same showers and sun-shine with his own. This man is hurrying to a concert, only lest others should have heard the new musician before him; another bursts from his company to the play, because he fancies himself the patron of an actress; some spend the morning in consultations with their taylor, and some in directions to their cook: some are forming parties for cards, and some laying wagers at a horse-race.

It cannot, I think, be denied, that some of these lives are passed in trifles, in occupations by which the busy neither benefit themselves nor others, and by which no man could be long engaged, who seriously considered what he was doing, or had knowledge enough to compare what he is with what he might be made. However, as people who have the same inclination generally flock together, every trifler is kept in countenance by the sight of others as unprofitably active as himself; by kindling the heat of competition, he in time thinks himself important, and by having his mind intensely engaged, he is secured from weariness of himself.

Some degree of self-approbation is always the reward of diligence; and I cannot, therefore, but consider the laborious cultivation of petty pleasures, as a more happy and more virtuous disposition, than that universal contempt and haughty negligence, which is sometimes associated with powerful faculties, but is often assumed by indolence when it disowns its name, and aspires to the appellation of greatness of mind.

It has been long observed, that drollery and ridicule is the most easy kind of wit: let it be added, that contempt and arrogance is the easiest philosophy. To find some objection to every thing, and to dissolve in perpetual laziness under pretence that occasions are wanting to call forth activity, to laugh at those who are ridiculously busy without setting an example of more rational industry, is no less in the power of the meanest than of the highest intellects.

Our present state has placed us at once in such different relations, that every human employment, which is not a visible and immediate act of goodness, will be in some respect or other subject to contempt: but it is true, likewise, that almost every act, which is not directly vicious, is in some respect beneficial and laudable. 'I often,' says Bruyere, 'observe from my window, two beings of erect form and amiable countenance, endowed with the powers of reason, able to clothe their thoughts in language, and convey their notions to each other. They rise early in the morning, and are every day employed till sunset in rubbing two smooth stones together, or, in other terms, in polishing marble.'

'If lions could paint,' says the fable, 'in the room of those pictures which exhibit men vanquishing lions, we should see lions feeding upon men. If the stone-cutter could have written like Bruyere, what would he have replied?

'I look up,' says he, 'every day from my shop, upon a man whom the idlers, who stand still to gaze upon my work, often celebrate as a wit and a philosopher. I often perceive his face clouded with care, and am told that his taper is sometimes burning at midnight. The sight of a man who works so much harder than myself, excited my curiosity. I heard no sound of tools in his apartment, and, therefore, could not imagine what he was doing; but was told at last, that he was writing descriptions of mankind, who when he had described them would live just as they had lived before; that he sat up whole nights to change a sentence, because the sound of a letter was too often repeated; that he was often disquieted with doubts, about the propriety of a word which every body understood; that he would hesitate between two expressions equally proper, till he could not fix his choice but by consulting his friends; that he will run from one end of Paris to the other, for an opportunity of reading a period to a nice ear; that if a single line is heard with coldness and inattention, he returns home dejected and disconsolate; and that by all this care and labour, he hopes only to make a little book, which at last will teach no useful art, and which none who has it not will perceive himself to want. I have often wondered for what end such a being as this was sent into the world; and should be glad to see those who live thus foolishly, seized by an order of the government, and obliged to labour at some useful occupation.'

Thus, by a partial and imperfect representation, may every thing be made equally ridiculous. He that gazed with contempt on human beings rubbing stones together, might have prolonged the same amusement by walking through the city, and

seeing others with looks of importance heaping one brick upon another; or by rambling into the country, where he might observe other creatures of the same kind driving in a piece of sharp iron into the clay, or in the language of men less enlightened, ploughing the field.

As it is thus easy by a detail of minute circumstances to make every thing little, so it is not difficult by an aggregation of effects to make every thing great. The polisher of marble may be forming ornaments for the palaces of virtue, and the schools of science; or providing tables on which the actions of heroes and the discoveries of sages shall be recorded, for the incitement and instruction of future generations. The mason is exercising one of the principal arts by which reasoning beings are distinguished from the brute, the art to which life owes much of its safety and all its convenience, by which we are secured from the inclemency of the seasons, and fortified against the ravages of hostility; and the ploughman is changing the face of nature, diffusing plenty and happiness over kingdoms, and compelling the earth to give food to her inhabitants.

Greatness and littleness are terms merely comparative; and we err in our estimation of things, because we measure them by some wrong standard. The trifler proposes to himself only to equal or excel some other trifler, and is happy or miserable as he succeeds or miscarries: the man of sedentary desire and unactive ambition sits comparing his power with his wishes; and makes his inability to perform things impossible, an excuse to himself for performing nothing. Man can only form a just estimate of his own actions, by making his power the test of his performance, by comparing what he does with what he can do. Whoever steadily per-

severes in the exertion of all his faculties, does what is great with respect to himself; and what will not be despised by Him, who has given to all created beings their different abilities: he faithfully performs the task of life, within whatever limits his labours may be confined, or how soon soever they may be forgotten.

We can conceive so much more than we can accomplish, that whoever tries his own actions by his imagination, may appear despicable in his own eyes. He that despises for its littleness any thing really useful, has no pretensions to applaud the grandeur of his conceptions; since nothing but narrowness of mind hinders him from seeing, that by pursuing the same principles every thing limited will appear contemptible.

He that neglects the care of his family, while his benevolence expands itself in scheming the happiness of imaginary kingdoms, might with equal reason sit on a throne dreaming of universal empire, and of the diffusion of blessings over all the globe: yet even this globe is little, compared with the system of matter within our view! and that system barely something more than non-entity, compared with the boundless regions of space, to which neither eye nor imagination can extend.

From conceptions, therefore, of what we might have been, and from wishes to be what we are not, conceptions that we know to be foolish, and wishes which we feel to be vain, we must necessarily descend to the consideration of what we are. We have powers very scanty in their utmost extent, but which in different men are differently proportioned. Suitably to these powers we have duties prescribed, which we must neither decline for the sake of delighting ourselves with easier amusements, nor

overlook in idle contemplation of greater excellence or more extensive comprehension.

In order to the right conduct of our lives, we must remember, that we are not born to please ourselves. He that studies simply his own satisfaction, will always find the proper business of his station too hard or too easy for him. But if we bear continually in mind, our relation to The Father of Being, by whom we are placed in the world, and who has allotted us the part which we are to bear in the general system of life, we shall be easily persuaded to resign our own inclinations to Unerring Wisdom, and do the work decreed for us with cheerfulness and diligence.

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N° 129. TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1754.

Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia ——— JUV.

Whate'er excites our hatred, love or joy,
Or hope, or fear, these themes my muse employ.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR, Bath, Dec. 29.

LEONARDO DA VINCI, one of the most accomplished masters in the art of painting, was accustomed to delineate instantly in his pocket book every face in which he discovered any singularity of air or feature. By this method he obtained a vast

collection of various countenances; and escaped that barren uniformity and resemblance, so visible in the generality of history pieces, that the spectator is apt to imagine all the figures are of one family.

As a moralist should imitate this practice, and sketch characters from the life, at the instant in which they strike him; I amused myself yesterday in the Pump-room, by contemplating the different conditions and characters of the persons who were moving before me, and particularly the various motives that influenced them to crowd to the city.

Aphrodisius, a young nobleman of great hopes and large property, fell into a course of early debauchery at Westminster school, and at the age of sixteen privately kept an abandoned woman of the town, to whose lodgings he stole in the intervals of school hours, and who soon communicated to him a disease of peculiar power to poison the springs of life, and prevent the maturity of manhood. His body is enervated and emaciated, his cheek yellow and bloodless, his hand palsied, and his mind gloomy and dejected. It being thought, however, absolutely necessary for the welfare of his family that he should marry, he has been betrothed, in this dreadful condition, to a lady whose beauty and vivacity are in their meridian: and his physicians have ordered him to these salutary waters to try if it be possible for him to recover a little health before the marriage is celebrated. Can we wonder at the diminished race of half-formed animals, that crawl about our streets in the shape of men, when matches so unequal and so unnatural are not only permitted, but enjoined as a test of filial duty, and the condition of parental favour:

Invalidique patrum referant jejunia nati. VIRG.

——From the faint embrace
Unmanly sons arise, a puny race!

Inertio is a plump and healthy old bachelor, a senior fellow of a rich society in one of our universities, whose chief business in life is to ride before dinner for a good appetite, and after it for a good digestion. Not only his situation but his taste has determined him to continue in a state of celibacy; 'for,' says he, 'at present I can afford to drink port and keep a couple of geldings; but if I should rashly encumber myself with madam and her brats, I must descend to walk on foot and drink ale.' He was much alarmed at missing his regular annual fit of the gout, and, on that account, having waited for it with impatience and uneasiness a month longer than the expected time, he hurried to this city in hopes of acquiring it by the efficacy of the waters. I found him yesterday extremely dejected, and on my entering his chamber, 'Life,' said he, 'is full of vexations and disappointments: what a dreadful accident!' I imagined that some selected friend, some brother of his choice, was dead, or that the college treasury was burnt: but he immediately undeceived me by adding—'I was presented with the finest, the fattest collar of brawn, and expected it at dinner this day: but the rascally carrier has conveyed it to a wrong place, fifty miles off, and before I can receive it, it will be absolutely unfit for eating.'

. . . . . .

Here likewise is the learned and ingenious Crito. Crito is a genius of a superior order, who hath long instructed and entertained his country by many incomparable works of literature and morality; and who in a Grecian commonwealth would have had a statue erected, and have been maintained at the public expence; but in this kingdom he has with great difficulty gained a precarious competence, by incessant labour and application. These uninterrupted and unrewarded studies have at length im-

paired his health, and undermined a constitution naturally vigorous and happy: and as Crito has never been able to lay up a sum sufficient to procure him the assistance which the debility of sickness and age require, he was obliged to insure his life, and borrow at exorbitant interest a few pounds to enable him to perform this journey to Bath, which alone could restore his health and spirits; and now, as his money and credit are exhausted, he will be compelled to abandon this place, when his cure is only half-effected; and must retire to languish in a little lodging in London, while his readers and admirers content themselves with lamenting his distress, and wondering how it comes to pass that nothing has been done for a man of such distinguished abilities and integrity.

Doctor Pamper is possessed of three large ecclesiastical preferments: his motive for coming hither is somewhat singular; it is, because his parishes cannot furnish him with a set of persons that are equal to him in the knowledge of whist; he is, therefore, necessitated every season to frequent this place, where alone he can meet with gamesters that are worth contending with.

Spumosius, who is one of the liveliest of free-thinkers, had not been three months at the Temple before he became irresistibly enamoured of the beauty of virtue. He always carried a Shaftesbury in his pocket, and used to read and explain the striking passages to large circles at the coffee-house; he was of opinion that for purity and perspicuity, elegance of style, and force of reasoning, the Characteristics were incomparable, and were models equally proper for regulating our taste and our morals. He discovered a delicate artificial connection in these discourses, which to vulgar eyes appear to be loose and incoherent rhapsodies: nay, he clearly perceived, that each treatise depended on the foregoing, and altogether

composed one uniform whole, and the noblest system of truth and virtue that had been imparted to mankind. He quarrelled irreconcilably with his dearest friend, who happened to hint, that the style was affected and unharmonious, the metaphors far-fetched and violent, and frequently coarse and illiberal, the arguments inconclusive and unfair, the raillery frigid and insipid, and totally different from the Attic irony of Socrates, which the author presumed to propose for his pattern. Spumosius always disdained to practise virtue on the mean and mercenary motives of reward and punishment; and was convinced, that so excellent a creature as man might be kept in order by the silken cords of delicacy and decorum. He, therefore, frequently sneered at the priestly notions of heaven and hell, as fit only to be entertained by vulgar and sordid minds. But being lately attacked by a severe distemper, he betrayed fears that were not compatible with the boldness of his former professions; and terrified at the approach of death, has had recourse to various remedies, and is at last arrived here, as full of doubt as of disease, but feeling more acute pain in his mind than can possibly be inflicted on his body.

Mr. Gull was lately a soap-boiler at Chester, but having accumulated a vast fortune by trade, he is now resolved to be polite, and enjoy his money with taste. He has brought his numerous family of awkward girls hither, only because he has heard that people of fashion, do at this time of the year, generally take a trip to Bath: and for the same reason he intends in the spring to make a journey to Paris, and will, I dare say, commence virtuoso on his return, and be a professed judge of dress, pictures, and furniture.

I must not forget to inform you that we have the company of Captain Gairish, a wit and a critic, who pretends he is perfectly acquainted with the best.

writers of the age, and whose opinion on every new work is deemed decisive in the Pump-room. The prefaces of Dryden, and the French critics, are the sources from which his immense literature is derived. Dacier's Plutarch has enabled him to talk familiarly of the most celebrated Greeks and Romans, and Bayle's Dictionary finished him for a scholar. Sometimes he vouchsafes to think the Adventurer tolerable; but he generally exclaims, 'How grave and sententious! Good Heavens! what more Greek! This circumstance will ruin the credit of the paper. They will not take my advice, for you must know I am intimate with all the authors of it; they are ten in number; and some of them——But as I have been entrusted with their secrets, I must disclose no more. To tell you the truth, I have given them a few essays myself, which I have written for my amusement upon guard.'

If these portraits, which are faithfully copied from the life, should amuse you, I may, perhaps, take an opportunity of adding to the collection.

I am,

Z Mr. Adventurer, Yours,

PHILOMEDES.

N° 130. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1754.

Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit. MART.

The man will surely fail who dares delay,
And lose to-morrow that has lost to-day.

It was said by Raleigh, when some of his friends lamented his confinement under a sentence of death, which he knew not how soon he might suffer, 'that the world itself was only a larger prison, out of which some were every day selected for execution.' That there is a time when every man is struck with a sense of this awful truth, I do not doubt; and, perhaps, a hasty speculatist would conclude that its influence would be stronger in proportion as it more frequently occurred: but upon every mind that is become familiar with calamity, calamity loses its force; and misery grows less only by its continuance, because those who have long suffered, lose their sensibility.

If he, who lies down at night in the vigour and health of five-and-twenty, should rise in the morning with the infirmities of fourscore, it is not improbable that he would sink under a sense of his condition; regret of enjoyments which could never return, would preclude all that remained, and the last mournful effects of decay would be hastened and aggravated by anticipation. But those who have been enfeebled by degrees, who have been shaken ten years by the

the palsy; or crippled by the gout, frequently totter about upon their crutches with an air of waggish jocularity, are always ready to entertain their company with a jest, meet their acquaintance with a toothless grin, and are the first to toast a young beauty when they can scarce lift the glass to their lips. Even criminals, who knew that in the morning they were to die, have often slept in the night; though very few of those who have been committed for a capital offence, which they knew would be easily proved, have slept the first night after they were confined. Danger so sudden and so imminent alarms, confounds, and terrifies; but after a time stupor supplies the want of fortitude; and as the evil approaches, it is in effect less terrible, except in the moment when it arrives: and then, indeed, it is common to lament that insensibility, which before perhaps was voluntarily increased by drunkenness or dissipation, by solitary intemperance or tumultuous company.

There is some reason to believe, that 'this power of the world to come,' as it is expressed in the sublimity of Eastern metaphor, is generally felt at the same age. The dread of death has seldom been found to intrude upon the cheerfulness, simplicity, and innocence of children; they gaze at a funeral procession with as much vacant curiosity, as at any other shew, and see the world change before them without the least sense of their own share in the vicissitude. In youth, when all the appetites are strong, and every gratification is heightened by novelty, the mind resists mournful impressions with a kind of elastic power, by which the signature that is forced upon it is immediately effaced: when this tumult first subsides, while the attachment of life is yet strong, and the mind begins to look forward, and concert measures by which those enjoyments may be secured which it is solicitous to keep, or

others obtained to atone for the disappointments that are past, then death starts up like a spectre in all his terrors, the blood is chilled at his appearance, he is perceived to approach with a constant and irresistible pace, retreat is impossible, and resistance is vain.

The terror and anguish which this image produces whenever it first rushes upon the mind, are always complicated with a sense of guilt and remorse; and generally produce some hasty and zealous purposes of more uniform virtue and more ardent devotion, of something that may secure us not only from the worm that never dies and the fire that is not quenched, but from total mortality, and admit hope to the regions beyond the grave.

This purpose is seldom wholly relinquished, though it is not always executed with vigour and perseverance; the reflection which produced it often recurs, but it still recurs with less force; desire of immediate pleasure becomes predominant; appetite is no longer restrained; and either all attempts to secure future happiness are deferred 'to a more convenient season,' or some expedients are sought to render sensuality and virtue compatible, and to obtain every object of hope without lessening the treasures of possession. Thus vice naturally becomes the disciple of infidelity; and the wretch who dares not aspire to the heroic virtue of a Christian, listens with eagerness to every objection against the authority of that law by which he is condemned, and labours in vain to establish another that will acquit him: he forms many arguments to justify natural desires; he learns at length to impose upon himself; and assents to principles which yet in his heart he does not believe; he thinks himself convinced, that virtue must be happiness, and then dreams that happiness is virtue.

These frauds, though they would have been im-

possible in the hour of conviction and terror, are yet practised with great ease when it is past, and contribute very much to prevent its return. It is, indeed, scarce possible, that it should return with the same force, because the power of novelty is necessarily exhausted in the first onset. Some incidents, however, there are, which renew the terror; and they seldom fail to renew the purpose: upon the death of a friend, a parent, or a wife, the comforts and the confidence of sophistry are at an end; the moment that suspends the influence of temptation, restores the power of conscience, and at once rectifies the understanding. He, who has been labouring to explain away those duties which he had not fortitude to practise, then sees the vanity of the attempt; he regrets the time that is past, and resolves to improve that which remains: but if the first purpose of reformation has been ineffectual, the second is seldom executed; as the sense of danger by which it is produced is not so strong, the motive is less; and as the power of appetite is increased by habitual gratification, the opposition is more: the new conviction wears off; the duties are again neglected as unnecessary, which are found to be unpleasant; the lethargy of the soul returns, and as the danger increases she becomes less susceptible of fear.

Thus the dreadful condition of him, 'who looks back after having put his hand to the plough,' may be resolved into natural causes; and it may be affirmed, upon mere philosophical principles, that there is a call which is repeated no more, and an apostasy from which it is extremely difficult to return.

Let those who still delay that which yet they believe to be of eternal moment, remember that their motives to effect it will still grow weaker, and the difficulty of the work perpetually increase; to neglect it now, therefore, is a pledge that it will be neglected

for ever: and if they are roused by this thought, let them instantly improve its influence; for even this thought when it returns, will return with less power, and though it should rouse them now, will perhaps rouse them no more. But let them not confide in such virtue as can be practised without a struggle, and which interdicts the gratification of no passion but malice; nor adopt principles which could never be believed at the only time when they could be useful; like arguments which men sometimes form when they slumber, and the moment they awake discover to be absurd.

Let those who in the anguish of an awakened mind have regretted the past, and resolved to redeem it in the future, persist invariably to do whatever they then wished to have done. Let this be established as a constant rule of action, and opposed to all the cavils of sophistry and sense; for this wish will inevitably return when it must for ever be ineffectual, at that awful moment when 'the shadow of death shall be stretched over them, and that night commence in which no man can work.'

N° 131. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1754.

——————————*Misce*
Ergo aliquid nostris de moribus. JUV.

And mingle something of our times to please.
DRYDEN, Juv.

FONTENELLE, in his panegyric on Sir Isaac Newton, closes a long enumeration of that great philosopher's virtues and attainments, with an observation, that 'he was not distinguished from other men by any singularity either natural or affected.'

It is an eminent instance of Newton's superiority to the rest of mankind, that he was able to separate knowledge from those weaknesses by which knowledge is generally disgraced; that he was able to excel in science and wisdom, without purchasing them by the neglect of little things; and that he stood alone, merely because he had left the rest of mankind behind him, not because he deviated from the beaten track.

Whoever, after the example of Plutarch, should compare the lives of illustrious men, might set this part of Newton's character to view with great advantage, by opposing it to that of Bacon, perhaps the only man of later ages, who has any pretentions to dispute with him the palm of genius and science.

Bacon, after he had added to a long and careful contemplation of almost every other object of know-

ledge a curious inspection into common life, and after having surveyed nature as a philosopher, had examined 'men's business and bosoms' as a statesman; yet failed so much in the conduct of domestic affairs, that, in the most lucrative post to which a great and wealthy kingdom could advance him, he felt all the miseries of distressful poverty, and committed all the crimes to which poverty incites. Such were at once his negligence and rapacity, that as it is said, he would gain by unworthy practises that money, which, when so acquired, his servants might steal from one end of the table, while he sat studious and abstracted at the other.

As scarcely any man has reached the excellence, very few have sunk to the weakness of Bacon: but almost all the studious tribe, as they obtain any participation of his knowledge, feel likewise some contagion of his defects; and obstruct the veneration which learning would procure, by follies greater or less to which only learning could betray them.

It has been formerly remarked by The Guardian, that the world punishes with too great severity the error of those, who imagine that the ignorance of little things may be compensated by the knowledge of great; for so it is, that as more can detect petty failings than can distinguish or esteem great qualifications, and as mankind is in general more easily disposed to censure than to admiration, contempt is often incurred by slight mistakes, which real virtue or usefulness cannot counterbalance.

Yet such mistakes and inadvertencies, it is not easy for a man deeply immersed in study to avoid; no man can become qualified for the common intercourses of life, by private meditation; the manners of the world are not a regular system, planned by philosophers upon settled principles, in which every cause has a congruous effect, and one part

has a just reference to another. Of the fashions prevalent in every country, a few have arisen, perhaps, from particular temperatures of the climate; a few more from the constitution of the government; but the greater part have grown up by chance, been started by caprice, been contrived by affectation, or borrowed without any just motives of choice from other countries.

Of all these, the savage that hunts his prey upon the mountains, and the sage that speculates in his closet, must necessarily live in equal ignorance; yet by the observation of these trifles it is, that the ranks of mankind are kept in order, that the address of one to another is regulated, and the general business of the world carried on with facility and method.

These things, therefore, though small in themselves, become great by their frequency; and he very much mistakes his own interest, who, to the unavoidable unskilfulness of abstraction and retirement, adds a voluntary neglect of common forms, and increases the disadvantages of a studious course of life by an arrogant contempt of those practices, by which others endeavour to gain favour and multiply friendships.

A real and interior disdain of fashion and ceremony, is indeed, not very often to be found: much the greater part of those who pretend to laugh at foppery and formalities, secretly wish to have possessed those qualifications which they pretend to despise; and because they find it difficult to wash away the tincture which they have so deeply imbibed, endeavour to harden themselves in a sullen approbation of their own colour. Neutrality is a state, into which the busy passions of man cannot easily subside; and he who is in danger of the pangs of

envy, is generally forced to recreate his imagination with an effort of contempt.

Some, however, may be found, who, supported by the consciousness of great abilities, and elevated by a long course of reputation and applause, voluntarily consign themselves to singularity, affect to cross the roads of life because they know that they shall not be justled, and indulge a boundless gratification of will, because they perceive that they shall be quietly obeyed. Men of this kind are generally known by the name of Humourists, an appellation by which he that has obtained it, and can be contented to keep it, is set free at once from the shackles of fashion; and can go in or out, sit or stand, be talkative or silent, gloomy or merry, advance absurdities or oppose demonstration, without any other reprehension from mankind, than that it is his way, that he is an odd fellow, and must be let alone.

This seems, to many, an easy passport through the various factions of mankind; and those on whom it is bestowed, appear too frequently to consider the patience with which their caprices are suffered as an undoubted evidence of their own importance, of a genius to which submission is universally paid, and whose irregularities are only considered as consequences of its vigour. These peculiarities, however, are always found to spot a character, though they may not totally obscure it; and he who expects from mankind, that they should give up established customs in compliance with his single will, and exacts that deference which he does not pay, may be endured, but can never be approved.

Singularity is, I think, in its own nature, universally and invariably displeasing. In whatever respect a man differs from others, he must be con-

sidered by them as either worse or better: by being better, it is well known that a man gains admiration oftener than love, since all approbation of his practice must necessarily condemn him that gives it; and though a man often pleases by inferiority, there are few who desire to give such pleasure. Yet the truth is, that singularity is almost always regarded as a brand of slight reproach; and where it is associated with acknowledged merit, serves as an abatement or an allay of excellence, by which weak eyes are reconciled to its lustre, and by which, though kindness is not gained, at least envy is averted.

But let no man be in haste to conclude his own merit so great or conspicuous, as to require or justify singularity: it is as hazardous for a moderate understanding to usurp the prerogatives of genius, as for a common form to play over the airs of uncontested beauty. The pride of men will not patiently endure to see one, whose understanding or attainments are but level with their own, break the rules by which they have consented to be bound, or forsake the direction which they submissively follow. All violation of established practice implies in its own nature a rejection of the common opinion, a defiance of common censure, and an appeal from general laws to private judgment: he, therefore, who differs from others without apparent advantage, ought not to be angry if his arrogance is punished with ridicule; if those, whose example he superciliously overlooks, point him out to derision, and hoot him back again into the common road.

The pride of singularity is often exerted in little things, where right and wrong are indeterminable, and where, therefore, vanity is without excuse. But there are occasions on which it is noble to dare to

stand alone. To be pious among infidels, to be disinterested in a time of general venality, to lead a life of virtue and reason in the midst of sensualists, is a proof of a mind intent on nobler things than the praise or blame of men, of a soul fixed in the contemplation of the highest good, and superior to the tyranny of custom and example.

In moral and religious questions only, a wise man will hold no consultations with fashion, because these duties are constant and immutable, and depend not on the notions of men, but the commands of Heaven: yet even of these, the external mode is to be in some measure regulated by the prevailing taste of the age in which we live; for he is certainly no friend to virtue, who neglects to give it any lawful attraction, or suffers it to displease the eye, or alienate the affections, for want of innocent compliance with fashionable decoration.

It is yet remembered of the learned and pious Nelson, that he was remarkably elegant in his manners, and splendid in his dress. He knew, that the eminence of his character drew many eyes upon him; and he was careful not to drive the young or the gay away from religion, by representing it as an enemy to any distinction or enjoyment in which human nature may innocently delight.

In this censure of singularity, I have, therefore, no intention to subject reason or conscience to custom or example. To comply with the notions and practices of mankind is in some degree the duty of a social being; because by compliance only he can please, and by pleasing only he can become useful: but as the end is not to be lost for the sake of the means, we are not to give up virtue to complaisance; for the end of complaisance is only to gain the kindness of our fellow-beings, whose kindness is desira-

ble only as instrumental to happiness, and happiness must be always lost by departure from virtue.

T

N° 132. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1754.

——*Ferimur per opaca locorum.* VIRG.

——Driv'n thro' the palpable obscure.

CARAZAN, the merchant of Bagdat, was eminent throughout all the East for his avarice and his wealth: his origin was obscure, as that of the spark which by the collision of steel and adamant is struck out of darkness; and the patient labour of persevering diligence alone had made him rich. It was remembered, that when he was indigent he was thought to be generous; and he was still acknowledged to be inexorably just. But whether in his dealings with men he discovered a perfidy which tempted him to put his trust in gold, or whether in proportion as he accumulated wealth he discovered his own importance to increase, Carazan prized it more as he used it less; he gradually lost the inclination to do good, as he acquired the power; and as the hand of time scattered snow upon his head, the freezing influence extended to his bosom.

But though the door of Carazan was never opened by hospitality, nor his hand by compassion, yet fear led him constantly to the mosque at the stated

hours of prayers; he performed all the rites of devotion with the most scrupulous punctuality, and had thrice paid his vows at the Temple of the Prophet. That devotion which arises from the Love of God, and necessarily includes the Love of Man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exalts that which was moral to divine, confers new dignity upon goodness, and is the object not only of affection but reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which every one wishes to be inflicted, or to insure it by the complication of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence. Carazan, therefore, when he had locked his door, and turning round with a look of circumspective suspicion proceeded to the mosque, was followed by every eye with silent malignity; the poor suspended their supplication when he passed by; and though he was known by every man, yet no man saluted him.

Such had long been the life of Carazan, and such was the character which he had acquired, when notice was given by proclamation, that he was removed to a magnificent building in the centre of the city, that his table should be spread for the public, and that the stranger should be welcome to his bed. The multitude soon rushed like a torrent to his door, where they beheld him distributing bread to the hungry and apparel to the naked, his eye softened with compassion, and his cheek glowing with delight. Every one gazed with astonishment at the prodigy; and the murmur of innumerable voices increasing like the sound of approaching thunder, Carazan beckoned with his hand; attention suspended the tumult in a moment, and he thus gratified the curiosity which had procured him audience.

To Him who touches the mountains and they smoke, The Almighty and the Most Merciful, be

everlasting honour! he has ordained sleep to be the minister of instruction, and his visions have reproved me in the night. As I was sitting alone in my Haram, with my lamp burning before me, computing the product of my merchandize, and exulting in the increase of my wealth, I fell into a deep sleep, and the hand of him who dwells in the third heaven was upon me. I beheld the Angel of death coming forward like a whirlwind, and he smote me before I could deprecate the blow. At the same moment I felt myself lifted from the ground, and transported with astonishing rapidity through the regions of the air. The earth was contracted to an atom beneath; and the stars glowed round me with a lustre that obscured the sun. The gate of Paradise was now in sight; and I was intercepted by a sudden brightness which no human eye could behold: the irrevocable sentence was now to be pronounced; my day of probation was past: and from the evil of my life nothing could be taken away, nor could any thing be added to the good. When I reflected that my lot for eternity was cast, which not all the powers of nature could reverse, my confidence totally forsook me; and while I stood trembling and silent, covered with confusion and chilled with horror, I was thus addressed by the radiance that flamed before me.

'Carazan, thy worship has not been accepted; because it was not prompted by Love of God: neither can thy righteousness be rewarded, because it was not produced by Love of Man: for thy own sake only hast thou rendered to every man his due; and thou hast approached the ALMIGHTY only for thyself. Thou hast not looked up with gratitude nor around thee with kindness. Around thee, thou hast indeed, beheld vice and folly; but if vice and folly could justify thy parsimony, would they not condemn the bounty of Heaven? If not upon the foolish and

the vicious, where shall the sun diffuse his light, or the clouds distil their dew? Where shall the lips of the spring breathe fragrance, or the hand of autumn diffuse plenty? Remember, Carazan, that thou has shut compassion from thine heart, and grasped thy treasures with a hand of iron; thou hast lived for thyself; and, therefore, henceforth for ever thou shalt subsist alone. From the light of Heaven, and from the society of all beings, shalt thou be driven; solitude shall protract the lingering hours of eternity, and darkness aggravate the horrors of despair.' At this moment I was driven by some secret and irresistible power through the glowing system of creation, and passed innumerable worlds in a moment. As I approached the verge of nature, I perceived the shadows of total and boundless vacuity deepen before me, a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude and darkness! Unutterable horror seized me at the prospect, and this exclamation burst from me with all the vehemence of desire: 'O! that I had been doomed for ever to the common receptacle of impenitence and guilt! their society would have alleviated the torment of despair, and the rage of fire could not have excluded the comfort of light. Or if I had been condemned to reside in a comet, that would return but once in a thousand years to the regions of light and life; the hope of these periods, however distant, would cheer me in the dread interval of cold and darkness, and the vicissitude would divide eternity into time.' While this thought passed over my mind, I lost sight of the remotest star, and the last glimmering of light was quenched in utter darkness. The agonies of despair every moment increased, as every moment augmented my distance from the last habitable world. I reflected with intolerable anguish, that when ten thousand thousand years had carried me beyond the reach of all but that Power

who fills infinitude, I should still look forward into an immense abyss of darkness, through which I should still drive without succour and without society, farther and farther still, for ever and for ever. I then stretched out my hand towards the regions of existence, with an emotion that awaked me. Thus have I been taught to estimate society, like every other blessing, by its loss. My heart is warmed to liberality; and I am zealous to communicate the happiness which I feel, to those from whom it is derived; for the society of one wretch, whom in the pride of prosperity I would have spurned from my door, would, in the dreadful solitude to which I was condemned, have been more highly prized than the gold of Afric, or the gems of Golconda.

At this reflection upon his dream, Carazan became suddenly silent, and looked upward in ecstacy of gratitude and devotion. The multitude were struck at once with the precept and example; and the Caliph, to whom the event was related, that he might be liberal beyond the power of gold, commanded it to be recorded for the benefit of posterity.

N° 133. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1754.

At nostri proavi Plautinos & numeros et
Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque,
Ne dicam stultè, mirati; si modo ego & vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto. HOR.

'And yet our sires with joy could Plautus hear;
'Gay were his jests, his numbers charm'd their ear.'
Let me not say too lavishly they prais'd;
But sure their judgment was full cheaply pleas'd,
If you or I with taste are haply blest,
To know a clownish from a courtly jest. FRANCIS.

THE fondness I have so frequently manifested for the ancients, has not so far blinded my judgment as to render me unable to discern or unwilling to acknowledge the superiority of the moderns, in pieces of Humour and Ridicule. I shall, therefore, confirm the general assertion of Addison, part of which hath already been examined.

Comedy, Satire, and Burlesque, being the three chief branches of ridicule, it is necessary for us to compare together the most admired performances of the ancients and moderns in these three kinds of writing, to qualify us justly to censure or commend, as the beauties or blemishes of each party may deserve.

AS Aristophanes wrote to please the multitude, at a time when the licentiousness of the Athenians

was boundless, his pleasantries are coarse and unpolite, his characters extravagantly forced, and distorted with unnatural deformity, like the monstrous caricaturas of Callot.

He is full of the grossest obscenity, indecency, and inurbanity; and as the populace always delight to hear their superiors abused and misrepresented, he scatters the rankest calumnies on the wisest and worthiest personages of his country. His style is unequal, occasioned by a frequent introduction of parodies on Sophocles and Euripides. It is, however, certain, that he abounds in artful allusions to the state of Athens at the time when he wrote; and, perhaps, he is more valuable, considered as a political satirist, than a writer of comedy.

Plautus has adulterated a rich vein of genuine wit and humour, with a mixture of the basest buffoonery. No writer seems to have been born with a more forcible or more fertile genius for comedy. He has drawn some characters with incomparable spirit: we are indebted to him for the first good miser, and for that worn-out character among the Romans, a boastful Thraso. But his love degenerates into lewdness; and his jests are insupportably low and illiberal, and fit only for 'the dregs of Romulus' to use and to hear; he has furnished examples of every species of true and false wit, even down to a quibble and a pun. Plautus lived in an age when the Romans were but just emerging into politeness; and I cannot forbear thinking, that if he had been reserved for the age of Augustus, he would have produced more perfect plays than even the elegant disciple of Menander.

Delicacy, sweetness, and correctness, are the characteristics of Terence. His polite images, are all represented in the most clear and perspicuous expression; but his characters are too general and

n, nor are they marked with those discrimi-
peculiarities that distinguish one man from
r; there is a tedious and disgusting sameness
dents in his plots, which, as hath been observed
former paper, are too complicated and intricate.
y be added, that he superabounds in soliloquies;
hat nothing can be more inartificial or impro-
han the manner in which he hath introduced

these three celebrated ancients I venture to
e singly the matchless Moliere, as the most
mmate master of comedy that former or later
have produced. He was not content with
ng obvious and common characters, but set
[illegible] to examine the numberless varieties
[illegible] nature: he soon discovered every diffe-
[illegible] however minute; and by a proper manage-
[illegible] make it striking: his portraits, there-
[illegible] they appear to be new, are yet disco-
[illegible] The Tartuffe and the Misantrope
[illegible] singular, and yet, perhaps, the most
[illegible] characters that comedy can
[illegible] Moliere excels that of any other
[illegible] he seems to have hit upon the true na-
[illegible] which is, to exhibit one singular
[illegible] character, by such a series of inci-
[illegible] to shew its singulari-
[illegible] in the Misantrope tend
[illegible] and [illegible] disgust of the
[illegible] in the Tartuffe are cal-
[illegible] of an accomplished
[illegible] English writer of
[illegible] to Moliere: al-
[illegible] that Falstaff and Mo-
[illegible] excellently sup-
[illegible] Shakspeare has contriv-
[illegible] the gluttony, lewd-

ness, cowardice, and boastfulness of the fat old knight: and Jonson has with equal art displayed the oddity of a whimsical humourist, who could endure no kind of noise.

Will it be deemed a paradox to assert, that Congreve's dramatic persons have no striking and natural characteristic? His Fondlewife and Foresight are but faint portraits of common characters, and Ben is a forced and unnatural caricatura. His plays appear not to be legitimate comedies, but strings of repartees and sallies of wit, the most poignant and polite, indeed, but unnatural and ill placed. The trite and trivial character of a fop hath strangely engrossed the English stage, and given an insipid similarity to our best comic pieces: originals can never be wanting in such a kingdom as this, where each man follows his natural inclinations and propensities, if our writers would really contemplate nature, and endeavour to open those mines of humour which have been so long and so unaccountably neglected.

If we proceed to consider the Satirists of antiquity, I shall not scruple to prefer Boileau and Pope to Horace and Juvenal; the arrows of whose ridicule are more sharp, in proportion as they are more polished. That reformers should abound in obscenities, as is the case of the two Roman poets, is surely an impropriety of the most extraordinary kind; the courtly Horace also sometimes sinks into mean and farcical abuse, as in the first lines of the seventh satire of the first book; but Boileau and Pope have given to their Satire the Cestus of Venus: their ridicule is concealed and oblique; that of the Romans direct and open. The tenth satire of Boileau on women is more bitter, and more decent and elegant, than the sixth of Juvenal on the same

subject; and Pope's epistle to Mrs. Blount far excels them both, in the artfulness and delicacy with which it touches female foibles. I may add, that the imitations of Horace by Pope, and of Juvenal by Johnson, are preferable to their originals in the appositeness of their examples, and in the poignancy of their ridicule. Above all, the Lutrin, the Rape of the Lock, the Dispensary, and the Dunciad, cannot be paralleled by any works that the wittiest of the ancients can boast of: because by assuming the form of the epopea, they have acquired a dignity and gracefulness, which all satires delivered merely in the poet's own person must want, and with which the satirists of antiquity were wholly unacquainted; for the Batrachomuomachia of Homer cannot be considered as the model of these admirable pieces.

Lucian is the greatest master of Burlesque among the ancients: but the travels of Gulliver, though indeed evidently copied from his True History, do as evidently excel it. Lucian sets out with informing his readers, that he is in jest, and intends to ridicule some of the incredible stories in Ctesias and Herodotus: this introduction surely enfeebles his satire, and defeats his purpose. The True History consists only of the most wild, monstrous, and miraculous persons and accidents: Gulliver has a concealed meaning, and his dwarfs and giants convey tacitly some moral or political instruction. The Charon, or the Prospect (σκοπουντες), one of the dialogues of Lucian, has likewise given occasion to that agreeable French satire, entitled, 'Le Diable Boiteux,' or 'The lame Devil;' which has highly improved on its original by a greater variety of characters and descriptions, lively remarks, and interesting adventures. So if a parallel be drawn between Lucian and Cervantes, the ancient will still

appear to disadvantage: the burlesque of Lucian principally consists in making his gods and philosophers speak and act like the meanest of the people; that of Cervantes arises from the solemn and important air with which the most idle and ridiculous actions are related: and is, therefore, much more striking and forcible. In a word, Don Quixote, and its copy Hudibras, the Splendid Shilling, the Adventures of Gil Blas, the Tale of a Tub, and the Rehearsal, are pieces of humour which antiquity cannot equal, much less excel.

Theophrastus must yield to La Bruyere for his intimate knowledge of human nature; and the Athenians never produced a writer whose humour was so exquisite as that of Addison, or who delineated and supported a character with so much nature and true pleasantry as that of Sir Roger de Coverly. It ought, indeed, to be remembered, that every species of wit written in distant times and in dead languages, appears with many disadvantages to present readers, from their ignorance of the manners and customs alluded to and exposed; but the grossness, the rudeness, and indelicacy of the ancients will, notwithstanding, sufficiently appear, even from the sentiments of such critics as Cicero and Quintilian, who mention corporal defects and deformities as proper objects of raillery.

If it be now asked to what can we ascribe this superiority of the moderns in all the species of Ridicule? I answer, to the improved state of conversation. The great geniuses of Greece and Rome were formed during the times of a republican government: and though it be certain, as Longinus asserts, that democracies are the nurseries of true sublimity; yet monarchies and courts are more productive of politeness. The arts of civility, and the decencies of conversa-

tion, as they unite men more closely, and bring them more frequently together, multiply opportunities of observing those incongruities and absurdities of behaviour, on which Ridicule is founded. The ancients had more Liberty and Seriousness; the moderns have more Luxury and Laughter.

Z

N° 134. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1754.

———Virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi. - JUVENAL.

Rarely they rise by virtue's aid, who lie
Plung'd in the depth of helpless poverty.
DRYDEN.

TO THE ADVENTURER.

SIR,

As I was informed by your bookseller, upon whom I called a few days ago to make a small purchase for my daughter, that your whole work would be comprised in one hundred and forty papers, I can no longer delay to send you the account of her life, which I gave you some reason to expect when I related my own*. This account she gave in that

* NUMB. LXXXVI.

dreadful night, the remembrance of which still freezes me with horror; the night in which I had hired her as a prostitute, and could not have been deterred from incest, but by an event so extraordinary that it was almost miraculous. I have, indeed, frequently attempted to relate a story which I can never forget, but I was always dissatisfied with my own expressions: nor could I ever produce in writing a narrative which appeared equal to the effect that it wrought upon my mind when I heard it. I have, therefore, prevailed upon the dear injured girl to relate it in her own words, which I shall faithfully transcribe.

The first situation that I remember was in a cellar; where, I suppose, I had been placed by the parish officers with a woman who kept a little dairy. My nurse was obliged to be often abroad, and I was then left to the care of a girl, who was just old enough to lug me about in her arms, and who, like other petty creatures in office, knew not how to shew her authority but by the abuse of it. Such was my dread of her power and resentment, that I suffered almost whatever she inflicted without complaint; and when I was scarcely four years old, had learnt so far to surmount the sense of pain and suppress my passions, that I have been pinched black and blue without wincing, and patiently suffered her to impute to me many trivial mischiefs which her own perverseness or carelessness had produced.

This situation, however, was not without its advantages; for instead of a hard crust and small beer, which would probably have been the principal part of my subsistence if I had been placed with a person of the same rank, but of a different employment, I had always plenty of milk; which, though it had been skimmed for cream, was not sour, and which indeed was wholesome food; upon which I throve very fast, and was taken notice of by every body for

the freshness of my looks, and the clearness of my skin.

Almost as soon as I could speak plain, I was sent to the parish school to learn to read; and thought myself as fine in my blue gown and badge, as a court beauty in a birth-night suit. The mistress of the school was the widow of a clergyman, whom I have often heard her mention with tears, though he had been long dead when I first came under her tuition, and left her in such circumstances as made her solicit an employment, of which before she would have dreaded the labour, and scorned the meanness. She had been very genteelly educated, and had acquired a general knowledge of literature after her marriage; the communication of which enlivened their hours of retirement, and afforded such a subject of conversation, as added to every other enjoyment the pleasures of beneficence and gratitude.

There was something in her manner, which won my affection and commanded my reverence. I found her a person very different from my nurse; and I watched her looks with such ardour and attention, that I was sometimes able, young as I was, to anticipate her commands. It was natural that she should love the virtue which she had produced, nor was it incongruous that she should reward it. I perceived, with inexpressible delight, that she treated me with peculiar tenderness; and when I was about eight years old, she offered to take my education wholly upon herself, without putting the parish to any farther charge for my maintenance. Her offer was readily accepted, my nurse was discharged, and I was taken home to my mistress, who called me her little maid, a name which I was ambitious to deserve, because she did not, like a tyrant, exact my obedience as a slave, but like a parent invited me to the duty of a child. As our family consisted only of my mistress and my

self, except sometimes a chairwoman, we were always alone in the intervals of business; and the good matron amused herself by instructing me, not only in reading, writing, and the first rules of arithmetic, but in various kinds of needlework; and what was yet of more moment, in the principles of virtue and religion, which in her life appeared to be so amiable, that I wanted neither example nor motive. She gave me also some general notions of the decorum practised among persons of a higher class; and I was thus acquainted, while I was yet a child, and in an obscure station, with some rudiments of good breeding.

Before I was fifteen I began to assist my benefactress in her employment, and by some plain work which she had procured me, I furnished myself with decent clothes. By an insensible and spontaneous imitation of her manner I had acquired such a carriage, as gained me more respect in a yard-wide stuff, than is often paid by strangers to an upper servant in a rich silk.

Such was now the simplicity and innocence of my life, that I had scarce a wish unsatisfied; and I often reflected upon my own happiness with a sense of gratitude that increased it. But alas! this felicity was scarce sooner enjoyed than lost: the good matron, who was in the most endearing sense my parent and my friend, was seized with a fever, which in a few days put an end to her life, and left me alone in the world without alliance or protection, overwhelmed with grief and distracted with anxiety. The world, indeed, was before me; but I trembled to enter it alone. I knew no art by which I could subsist myself; and I was unwilling to be condemned to a state of servitude, in which no such art could be learned. I, therefore, applied again to the officers of the parish, who, as a testimony of respect to my patroness, condescended still to consider me as their

charge, and with the usual sum bound me apprentice to a mantua-maker, whose business, of which, indeed, she had but little, was among persons that were something below the middle class, and who, as I verily believe, had applied to the churchwardens for an apprentice, only that she might silence a number of petty duns, and obtain new credit with the money that is given as a consideration for necessary clothes.

The dwelling of my new mistress was two back rooms in a dirty street near the Seven Dials. She received me, however, with great appearance of kindness; we breakfasted, dined, and supped together, and though I could not but regret the alteration of my condition, yet I comforted myself with reflecting, that in a few years I should be mistress of a trade by which I might become independant, and live in a manner more agreeable to my inclinations. But my indentures were no sooner signed, than I suffered a new change of fortune. The first step my mistress took was to turn away her maid, a poor slave who was covered only with rags and dirt, and whose ill qualities I foolishly thought were the only cause of her ill treatment. I was now compelled to light fires, go of errands, wash linen, and dress victuals, and in short to do every kind of household drudgery, and to sit up half the night, that the task of hemming and running seams, which had been assigned me, might be performed.

Though I suffered all this without murmur or complaint, yet I became pensive and melancholy; the tears would often steal silently from my eyes, and my mind was sometimes so abstracted in the contemplation of my own misery, that I did not hear what was said to me. But my sensibility produced resentment, instead of pity; my melancholy drew upon me the reproach of sullenness; I was

stormed at for spoiling my work with snivelling I knew not why, and threatened that it should not long be without cause; a menace which was generally executed the moment it was uttered; my arms and neck continually bore the marks of the yard, and I was in every respect treated with the most brutal unkindness.

In the mean time, however, I applied myself to learn the business as my last resource, and the only foundation of my hope. My diligence and assiduity atoned for the want of instruction; and it might have been truly said, that I stole the knowledge which my mistress had engaged to communicate. As I had a taste for dress, I recommended myself to the best customers, and frequently corrected a fault of which they complained, and which my mistress was not able to discover. The countenance and courtesy which this gained, though it encouraged my hope of the future, yet it made the present less tolerable. My tyrant treated me with yet more inhumanity, and my sufferings were so great, that I frequently meditated an escape, though I knew not whither to go, and though I foresaw that the moment I became a fugitive, I should forfeit all my interest, justify every complaint, and incur a disgrace which I could never obliterate.

I had now groaned under the most cruel oppression something more than four years; the clothes which had been the purchase of my own money I had worn out; and my mistress thought it her interest not to furnish me with any better than would just serve me to go out on her errands, and follow her with a bundle. But as so much of my time was past, I thought it highly reasonable, and indeed necessary, that I should make a more decent appearance, that I should attend the customers, take their orders and their measure, or at least fit on the work. After much premeditation, and many attempts, I at length

surmounted my fears, and in such terms and manner as I thought least likely to give offence, I entreated that I might have such clothes as might answer the purpose, and proposed to work so many hours extraordinary as would produce the money they should cost. But this request, however modest, was answered only with reproaches and insult. 'I wanted, forsooth, to be a gentlewoman: yes, I should be equipped to set up for myself. This she might have expected, for taking a beggar from the parish; but I should see that she knew how to mortify my pride, and disappoint my cunning.' I was at once grieved and angered at this treatment; and I believe, for the first time, expressed myself with some indignation and resentment. My resentment, however, she treated with derision and contempt, as an impotent attempt to throw off her authority; and declaring that she would soon shew me who was mistress, she struck me so violent a blow, that I fell from my chair. Whether she was frightened at my fall, or whether she suspected I should alarm the house, she did not repeat her blow, but contented herself with reviling the poverty and wretchedness which she laboured to perpetuate.

I burst into tears of anguish and resentment, and made no reply; but from this moment my hatred became irreconcileable, and I secretly determined at all events to escape from a slavery, which I accused myself for having already endured too long.

N° 135. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1754.

———*Latet anguis in herba.* VIRG.

Beneath the grass conceal'd a serpent lies.

It happened, that the next morning I was sent with some work as far as Chelsea: it was about the middle of May. Upon me, who had long toiled in the smoke and darkness of London, and had seen the sun-shine only upon a chimney, or a wall, the freshness of the air, the verdure of the fields, and the song of the birds, had the power of enchantment. I could not forbear lingering in my walk: and every moment of delay made me less willing to return; not indeed by increasing my enjoyment, but my fear: I was tenacious of the present, because I dreaded the future; and increased the evil which I approached at every step, by a vain attempt to retain and possess that which at every step I was leaving behind. I found, that not to look forward with hope, was not to look round with pleasure; and yet I still loitered away the hours which I could not enjoy, and returned in a state of anxious irresolution still taking the way home, because I knew not where else to go, but still neglecting the speed which alone could make home less dreadful. My torment increased as my walk became shorter; and when I had returned as far as the lower end of the Mall in St. James's Park, I was quite overwhelmed

with regret and despair, and sitting down on one of the benches I burst into tears.

As my mind was wholly employed on my own distress, and my apron held up to my eyes, it was some time before I discovered an elderly lady who had sat down by me. The moment I saw her, such is the force of habit, all thoughts of my own wretchedness gave way to a sense of indecorum; and as she appeared by her dress to be a person in whose company it was presumption in me to sit, I started up in great confusion, and would have left the seat. This, however, she would not suffer; but taking hold of my gown, and gently drawing me back, addressed me with an accent of tenderness, and soothed me with pity before she knew my distress. It was so long since I had heard the voice of kindness, that my heart melted as she spoke with gratitude and joy. I told her all my story; to which she listened with great attention, and often gazed stedfastly in my face. When my narrative was ended, she told me that the manner in which I had related it, was alone sufficient to convince her that it was true; that there was an air of simplicity and sincerity about me, which had prejudiced her in my favour as soon as she saw me; and, that, therefore, she was determined to take me home, that I should live with her till she had established me in my business, which she could easily do by recommending me to her acquaintance; and that in the mean time she would take care to prevent my mistress from being troublesome.

It is impossible to express the transport that I felt at this unexpected deliverance. I was utterly unacquainted with the artifices of those who are hackneyed in the ways of vice; and the remembrance of the disinterested kindness of my first

 whom I had been brought up, came fresh

into my mind: I, therefore, indulged the hope of having found such another without scruple; and uttering some incoherent expressions of gratitude, which was too great to be formed into compliment, I accepted the offer, and followed my conductress home. The house was such as I had never entered before; the rooms were spacious, and the furniture elegant. I looked round with wonder; and blushing with a sense of my own meanness, would have followed the servant who opened the door into the kitchen, but her mistress prevented me. She saw my confusion, and encouraged me with a smile, took me up stairs into a kind of dressing-room, where she immediately furnished me with clean shoes and stockings, a cap, handkerchief, ruffles, and apron, and a night-gown of a genteel Irish stuff, which had not been much worn, though it was spotted and stained in many places: they belonged, she said, to her cousin, a young lady for whom she had undertaken to provide; and insisted upon my putting them on, that I might sit down with her family at dinner; 'for,' said she, 'I have no acquaintance, to whom I could recommend a mantua-maker that I kept in my kitchen.'

I perceived that she watched me with great attention while I was dressing, and seemed to be greatly delighted with the alteration in my appearance when I had done. 'I see,' said she, 'that you was made for a gentlewoman, and a gentlewoman you shall be, or it shall be your own fault.' I could only court'sy in answer to this compliment; but notwithstanding the appearance of diffidence and modesty in the blush which I felt burn upon my cheek, yet my heart secretly exulted in a proud confidence that it was true. When I came down stairs, I was introduced by my patroness (who told me her name was Wellwood) to the young lady her

cousin, and three others; to whom, soon after we were seated, she related my story, intermixing much invective against my mistress, and much flattery to me, with neither of which, if the truth be confessed, I was much displeased.

After dinner, as I understood that company was expected, I entreated leave to retire, and was shewed up stairs into a small chamber very neatly furnished, which I was desired to consider as my own. As the company staid till it was very late, I drank tea and supped alone, one of the servants being ordered to attend me.

The next morning, when I came down stairs to breakfast, Mrs. Wellwood presented me with a piece of printed cotton sufficient for a sack and coat, and about twelve yards of slight silk for a night-gown, which, she said, I should make up myself as a specimen of my skill. I attempted to excuse myself from accepting this benefaction, with much hesitation and confusion; but I was commanded with a kind frown, and in a peremptory tone, to be silent. I was told, that, when business came in, I should pay all my debts; that in the mean time, I should be solicitous only to set up; and that a change of genteel apparel might be considered as my stock in trade, since without it my business could neither be procured nor transacted.

To work, therefore, I went; my clothes were made and worn; many encomiums were lavished upon my dexterity and my person; and thus I was entangled in the snare that had been laid for me, before I discovered my danger. I had contracted debts which it was impossible I should pay; the power of the law could now be applied to effect the purposes of guilt; and my creditor could urge me to her purpose, both by hope and fear.

I had now been near a month in my new lodging;

and great care had hitherto been taken to conceal whatever might shock my modesty, or acquaint me with the danger of my situation. Some incidents, however, notwithstanding this caution, had fallen under my notice, that might well have alarmed me; but as those who are waking from a pleasing dream, shut their eyes against the light, and endeavour to prolong the delusion by slumbering again, I checked my suspicions the moment they rose, as if danger that was not known would not exist; without considering that inquiry alone could confirm the good, and enable me to escape the evil.

The house was often filled with company, which divided into separate rooms; the visits were frequently continued till midnight, and sometimes till morning; I had, however, always desired leave to retire, which had hitherto been permitted, though not without reluctance; but at length I was pressed to make tea, with an importunity that I could not resist. The company was very gay, and some familiarities passed between the gentlemen and ladies which threw me into confusion and covered me with blushes; yet I was still zealous to impose upon myself, and, therefore, was contented with the supposition, that they were liberties allowed among persons of fashion, many of whose polite levities I had heard described and censured by the dear monitor of my youth, to whom I owed all my virtue and all my knowledge. I could not, however, reflect without solicitude and anxiety, that since the first week of my arrival I had heard no more of my business. I had, indeed, frequently ventured to mention it; and still hoped that when my patroness had procured me a little set of customers among her friends, I should be permitted to venture into a room of my own; for I could not think of carrying it on where it would degrade my benefac-

treat, of whom it could not without an affront be said, that she let lodgings to a mantua-maker; nor could I without indecorum distribute directions where I was to be found, till I had moved to another house. But whenever I introduced this subject of conversation, I was either rallied for my gravity, or gently reproached with pride, as impatient of obligation: sometimes I was told, with an air of merriment, that my business should be pleasure; and sometimes I was entertained with amorous stories, and excited by licentious and flattering descriptions, to a relish of luxurious idleness and expensive amusements. In short, my suspicions gradually increased; and my fears grew stronger, till my dream was at an end, and I could slumber no more. The terror that seized me, when I could no longer doubt into what hands I had fallen, is not to be expressed, nor, indeed, could it be concealed: the effect which it produced in my aspect and behaviour, afforded the wretch who attempted to seduce me, no prospect of success; and as she despaired of exciting me by the love of pleasure to voluntary guilt, she determined to effect her purpose by surprize, and drive me into her toils by desperation.

It was not less my misfortune than reproach, that I did not immediately quit a place in which I knew myself devoted to destruction. This, indeed, Mrs. Wellwood was very assiduous to prevent: the morning after I had discovered her purpose, the talk about my business was renewed; and as soon as we had breakfasted, she took me out with her in a hackney-coach, under pretence of procuring me a lodging; but she had still some plausible objection against all that we saw. Thus she contrived to busy my mind, and keep me with her the greatest part of the day; at three we returned to

dinner, and passed the afternoon without company. I drank tea with the family; and in the evening, being uncommonly drowsy, I went to bed near two hours sooner than usual.

N° 136. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1754.

——Quis talia fando
Temperet a lacrimis? VIRG.

And who can hear this tale without a tear?

To the transactions of this night I was not conscious; but what they had been the circumstances of the morning left me no room to doubt. I discovered with astonishment, indignation and despair, which for a time suspended all my faculties, that I had suffered irreparable injury in a state of insensibility; not so much to gratify the wretch by whom I had been abused, as that I might with less scruple admit another, and by reflecting that it was impossible to recover what I had lost, become careless of all that remained. Many artifices were used to soothe me; and when these were found to be ineffectual, attempts were made to intimidate me with menaces. I knew not exactly what passed in the first fury of my distraction, but at length it quite exhausted me. In the evening, being calm through mere languor and debility, and no precaution having been taken to detain me, because I was not thought able to escape, I found means to steal down

stairs, and get into the street without being missed. Wretched as I was, I felt some emotions of joy when I first found myself at liberty; though it was no better than the liberty of an exile in a desart, where having escaped from the dungeon and the wheel, he must yet, without a miracle, be destroyed by savages or hunger. It was not long, indeed, before I reflected, that I knew no house that would receive me, and that I had no money in my pocket. I had not, however, the least inclination to go back. I sometimes thought of returning to my old mistress, the mantua-maker; but the moment I began to anticipate the malicious inference she would draw from my absence and appearance, and her triumph in the mournful necessity that urged me to return, I determined rather to suffer any other evil that could befal me.

Thus destitute and forlorn, feeble and dispirited, I continued to creep along till the shops were all shut, and the deserted streets became silent. The busy crowds, which had almost borne me before them, were now dissipated; and every one was retired home, except a few wretched outcasts like myself, who were either huddled together in a corner, or strolling about not knowing whither they went. It is not easy to conceive the anguish, with which I reflected upon my condition; and, perhaps, it would scarcely have been thought possible, that a person who was not a fugitive from justice, nor an enemy to labour, could be thus destitute even of the little that is essential to life, and in danger of perishing for want in the midst of a populous city, abounding with accommodations for every rank, from the peer to the beggar. Such, however, was my lot. I found myself compelled by necessity to pass the night in the street, without hope of passing the next in any other place, or, indeed, of procuring food to support me

till it arrived. I had now fasted the whole day; my languor increased every moment; I was weary and fainting; my face was covered with a cold sweat, and my legs trembled under me: but I did not dare to sit down, or to walk twice along the same street, lest I should have been seized by the watch, or insulted by some voluntary vagabond in the rage or wantonness of drunkenness or lust. I knew not, indeed, well how to vary my walk; but imagined that, upon the whole, I should be more safe in the city, than among the brothels in the Strand, or in streets which being less frequented are less carefully watched: for though I scarce ventured to consider the law as my friend, yet I was more afraid of those who should attempt to break the peace, than those who were appointed to keep it. I went forward, therefore, as well as I was able, and passed through St. Paul's Church-yard as the clock struck one; but such was my misfortune, that the calamity which I dreaded overtook me in the very place to which I had fled to avoid it. Just as I was crossing at the corner into Cheapside, I was laid hold on by a man not meanly dressed, who would have hurried me down towards the Old Change. I knew not what he said, but I strove to disengage myself from him without making any reply: my struggles, indeed, were weak; and the man still keeping his hold, and perhaps mistaking the feebleness of my resistance for some inclination to comply, proceeded to indecencies, for which I struck him with the sudden force that was supplied by rage and indignation; but my whole strength was exhausted in the blow, which the brute instantly returned, and repeated till I fell. Instinct is still ready in the defence of life, however wretched; and though the moment before I had wished to die, yet in this distress I spontaneously cried out for help. My voice was heard by a watchman, who immediately

ran towards me, and finding me upon the ground, lifted up his lantern, and examined me with an attention, which made me reflect with great confusion upon the disorder of my dress, which before had not once occurred to my thoughts; my hair hung loosely about my shoulders, my stays were but half-laced, and the rest of my clothes were carelessly thrown on in the tumult and distraction of mind, which prevented my attending to trivial circumstances when I made my escape from Wellwood's. My general appearance, and the condition in which I was found, convinced the watchman that I was a strolling prostitute; and finding that I was not able to rise without assistance, he also concluded that I was drunk; he, therefore, set down his lantern, and calling his comrade to assist him, they lifted me up. As my voice was faultering, my looks wild, and my whole frame so feeble that I tottered as I stood, the man was confirmed in his first opinion; and seeing my face bloody, and my eyes swelled, he told me with a sneer, that to secure me from further ill treatment, he would provide a lodging for me till the morning; and accordingly they dragged me between them to the Compter, without any regard to my entreaties or distress.

I passed the night in agonies, upon which even now I shudder to look back; and in the morning I was carried before a magistrate. The watchman gave an account of his having found me very drunk, crying out murder, and breeding a riot in the street at one o'clock in the morning: 'I was scarcely yet sober,' he said, 'as his worship might see, and had been pretty handsomely beaten; but he supposed it was for an unsuccessful attempt to pick a pocket, at which I must have been very dexterous, indeed, to have succeeded in that condition.'

This account, however injurious, was greatly confirmed by my appearance: I was almost covered with

kennel dirt, my face was discoloured, my speech was inarticulate, and I was so oppressed with faintness and terror, that I could not stand without a support. The magistrate, however, with great kindness, called upon me to make my defence, which I attempted by relating the truth; but the story was told with so much hesitation, and was in itself so wild and improbable, so like the inartificial tales that are hastily formed as an apology for detected guilt, that it could not be believed; and I was told, that except I could support my character by some credible witness, I should be committed to Bridewell.

I was thunderstruck at this menace; and had formed ideas so dreadful of the place to which I was to be sent, that my dungeon at the mantua-maker's became a palace in the comparison; and to return thither, with whatever disadvantages, was now the utmost object of my hope. I, therefore, desired that my mistress might be sent for, and flattered myself that she would at least take me out of a house of correction, if it were only for the pleasure of tormenting me herself.

In about two hours the messenger returned, and with him my tyrant, who eyed me with such malicious pleasure, that my hopes failed me the moment I saw her, and I almost repented that she was come. She was, I believe, glad of an opportunity effectually to prevent my obtaining any part of her business, which she had some reason to fear; and therefore, told the justice who examined her, that 'she had taken me a beggar from the parish four years ago, and taught me her trade; but that I had been always sullen, mischievous, and idle; and it was more than a month since I had clandestinely left her service, in decent and modest apparel fitting my condition; and that she would leave his worship to judge, whether I came honestly by the tawdry rags which I had on my

back.' This account, however correspondent with my own, served only to confirm those facts which condemned me: it appeared incontestibly, that I had deserted my service; and been debauched in a brothel, where I had been furnished with clothes, and continued more than a month. That I had been ignorant of my situation, prostituted without my consent, and at last had escaped to avoid farther injury, appeared to be fictitious circumstances, invented to palliate my offence; the person whom I had accused lived in another county; and it was necessary for the present to bring the matter to a short issue: my mistress, therefore, was asked, whether she would receive me again, upon my promise of good behaviour; and upon her peremptory refusal, my mittimus was made out, and I was committed to hard labour. The clerk, however, was ordered to take a memorandum of my charge against Wellwood, and I was told that inquiry should be made about her.

After I had been confined about a week, a note was brought me without date or name, in which I was told, 'that my malice against those who would have been my benefactors was disappointed; that if I would return to them, my discharge should be procured, and I should still be kindly received; but that if I persisted in my ingratitude, it should not be unrevenged.' From this note I conjectured, that Wellwood had found means to stop an inquiry into her conduct, which she had discovered to have been begun upon my information, and had thus learnt where I was to be found; I therefore returned no answer, but that I was contented with my situation, and prepared to suffer whatever Providence should appoint.

During my confinement, I was not treated with great severity; and at the next court, as no particular crime was alledged against me, I was ordered to be discharged. As my character was now irretrievably

lost, as I had no friend who would afford me shelter, nor any business to which I could apply, I had no prospect but again to wander about the streets, without lodging and without food. I, therefore, intreated, that the officers of the parish to which I belonged, might be ordered to receive me into the work-house, till they could get me a service, or find me some employment by which my labour would procure me a subsistence. This request, so reasonable and so uncommon, was much commended, and immediately granted; but as I was going out at the gate with my pass in my hand, I was met by a bailiff, with an emissary of Wellwood's, and arrested for a debt of twenty pounds. As it was no more in my power to procure bail than to pay the money, I was immediately dragged to Newgate. It was soon known that I had not a farthing in my pocket, and that no money either for fees or accommodations could be expected; I was, therefore, turned over to a place called the common side, among the most wretched and the most profligate of human beings. In Bridewell, indeed, my associates were wicked; but they were overawed by the presence of their taskmaster, and restrained from licentiousness by perpetual labour: but my ears were now violated every moment by oaths, execrations, and obscenity; the conversation of Mother Wellwood, her inmates, and her guests, was chaste and holy to that of the inhabitants of this place; and in comparison with their life, that to which I had been solicited was innocent. Thus I began insensibly to think of mere incontinence without horror; and, indeed, became less sensible of more complicated enormities, in proportion as they became familiar. My wretchedness, however, was not alleviated, though my virtue became less. I was without friends and without money; and the misery of confinement in a noisome dungeon, was aggravated by hunger and

thirst, and cold and nakedness. In this hour of trial, I was again assailed by the wretch, who had produced it only to facilitate her success. And let not those, before whom the path of virtue has been strewed with flowers, and every thorn removed by prosperity, too severely censure me, to whom it was a barren and a rugged road in which I had long toiled with labour and anguish, if at last, when I was benighted in a storm, I turned at the first light, and hasted to the nearest shelter: let me not be too severely censured, if I now accepted liberty and ease and plenty, upon the only terms on which they could be obtained. I consented, with whatever reluctance and compunction, to return, and complete my ruin in the place where it was begun. The action of debt was immediately withdrawn, my fees were paid, and I was once more removed to my lodging near Covent Garden. In a short time I recovered my health and beauty; I was again dressed and adorned at the expence of my tyrant, whose power increased in proportion to my debt; the terms of prostitution were prescribed me; and out of the money, which was the price not only of my body but my soul, I scarce received more than I could have earned by weeding in a field. The will of my creditor was my law, from which I knew not how to appeal. My slavery was most deplorable, and my employment most odious; for the principles of virtue and religion, which had been implanted in my youth, however they had been choaked by weeds, could never be plucked up by the root; nor did I ever admit a dishonourable visit, but my heart sunk, my lips quivered, and my knees smote each other.

From this dreadful situation I am at length delivered. But while I lift up my heart in gratitude to Him, who alone can bring good out of evil, I desire it may be remembered, that my deviation to ill was natural, my recovery almost miraculous. My first

step to vice was the desertion of my service; and of this, all my guilt and misery were the consequence. Let none, therefore, quit the post that is assigned them by Providence, or venture out of the strait way; the bye-path, though it may invite them by its verdure, will inevitably lead them to a precipice; nor can it, without folly and presumption, be pronounced of any, that their first deviation from rectitude will produce less evil than mine.

Such, Mr. Adventurer, is the story of my child, and such are her reflections upon it; to which I can only add, that he who abandons his offspring, or corrupts them by his example, perpetrates greater evil than a murderer, in proportion as immortality is of more value than life,

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

AGAMUS.

N° 137. TUESDAY FEBRUARY 26, 1754.

Τι δ' ειξα. PYTH.

What have I been doing?

As man is a being very sparingly furnished with the power of prescience, he can provide for the future only by considering the past; and as futurity is all in which he has any real interest, he ought very diligently to use the only means by which he can be enabled to enjoy it, and frequently to revolve the experiments which he has hitherto made upon life, that he may gain wisdom from his mistakes, and caution from his miscarriages.

Though I do not so exactly conform to the precepts of Pythagoras, as to practise every night this solemn recollection, yet I am not so lost in dissipation as wholly to omit it; nor can I forbear sometimes to inquire of myself, in what employment my life has passed away. Much of my time has sunk into nothing, and left no trace by which it can be distinguished; and of this I now only know, that it was once in my power, and might once have been improved.

Of other parts of life memory can give some account; at some hours I have been gay, and at others serious; I have sometimes mingled in conversation, and sometimes meditated in solitude; one day has been spent in consulting the ancient sages, and another in writing Adventurers.

At the conclusion of any undertaking, it is usual

to compute the loss and profit. As I shall soon cease to write Adventurers, I could not forbear lately to consider what has been the consequence of my labours; and whether I am to reckon the hours laid out in these compositions, as applied to a good and laudable purpose, or suffered to fume away in useless evaporations.

That I have intended well, I have the attestation of my own heart: but good intentions may be frustrated, when they are executed without suitable skill, or directed to an end unattainable in itself.

Some there are, who leave writers very little room for self-congratulation; some who affirm, that books have no influence upon the public, that no age was ever made better by its authors, and that to call upon mankind to correct their manners, is like Xerxes, to scourge the wind or shackle the torrent.

This opinion they pretend to support by unfailing experience. The world is full of fraud and corruption, rapine, and malignity: interest is the ruling motive of mankind, and every one is endeavouring to increase his own stores of happiness by perpetual accumulation, without reflecting upon the numbers whom his superfluity condemns to want: in this state of things a book of morality is published, in which charity and benevolence are strongly enforced; and it is proved beyond opposition, that men are happy in proportion as they are virtuous, and rich as they are liberal. The book is applauded, and the author is preferred; he imagines his applause deserved, and receives less pleasure from the acquisition of reward than the consciousness of merit. Let us look again upon mankind: interest is still the ruling motive, and the world is yet full of fraud and corruption, malevolence and rapine.

The difficulty of confuting this assertion arises merely from its generality and comprehension: to

overthrow it by a detail of distinct facts, requires a wider survey of the world than human eyes can take; the progress of reformation is gradual and silent, as the extension of evening shadows; we know that they were short at noon, and are long at sun-set, but our senses were not able to discern their increase: we know of every civil nation, that it was once savage, and how was it reclaimed but by precept and admonition?

Mankind are universally corrupt, but corrupt in different degrees; as they are universally ignorant, yet with greater or less irradiations of knowledge. How has knowledge or virtue been increased and preserved in one place beyond another, but by diligent inculcation and rational enforcement?

Books of morality are daily written, yet its influence is still little in the world; so the ground is annually ploughed, and yet multitudes are in want of bread. But, surely, neither the labours of the moralist nor of the husbandman are vain: let them for a while neglect their tasks, and their usefulness will be known; the wickedness that is now frequent would become universal, the bread that is now scarce would wholly fail.

The power, indeed, of every individual is small, and the consequence of his endeavours imperceptible in a general prospect of the world. Providence has given no man ability to do much, that something might be left for every man to do. The business of life is carried on by a general co-operation; in which the part of any single man can be no more distinguished, than the effect of a particular drop when the meadows are floated by a summer shower: yet every drop increases the inundation, and every hand adds to the happiness or misery of mankind.

That a writer, however zealous or eloquent, seldom works a visible effect upon cities or nations, will rea-

dily be granted. The book which is read most, is read by few, compared with those that read it not; and of those few, the greater part peruse it with dispositions that very little favour their own improvement.

It is difficult to enumerate the several motives which procure to books the honour of perusal: spite, vanity, and curiosity, hope and fear, love and hatred, every passion which incites to any other action, serves at one time or other to stimulate a reader.

Some are fond to take a celebrated volume into their hands, because they hope to distinguish their penetration, by finding faults which have escaped the public; others eagerly buy it in the first bloom of reputation, that they may join the chorus of praise, and not lag, as Falstaff terms it, in 'the rearward of the fashion.'

Some read for style, and some for argument; one has little care about the sentiment, he observes only how it is expressed; another regards not the conclusion, but is diligent to mark how it is inferred: they read for other purposes than the attainment of practical knowledge; and are no more likely to grow wise by an examination of a treatise of moral prudence, than an architect to inflame his devotion by considering attentively the proportions of a temple.

Some read that they may embellish their conversation, or shine in dispute; some that they may not be detected in ignorance, or want the reputation of literary accomplishments: but the most general and prevalent reason of study is the impossibility of finding another amusement equally cheap or constant, equally dependent on the hour or the weather. He that wants money to follow the chase of pleasure through her yearly circuit, and is left at home when the gay world rolls to Bath or Tunbridge; he whose gout compels him to hear from his chamber, the rattle of

chariots transporting happier beings to plays and assemblies, will be forced to seek in books a refuge from himself.'

The author is not wholly useless, who provides innocent amusements for minds like these. There are in the present state of things so many more instigations to evil, than incitements to good, that he who keeps men in a neutral state, may be justly considered as a benefactor to life.

But, perhaps, it seldom happens, that study terminates in mere pastime. Books have always a secret influence on the understanding; we cannot at pleasure obliterate ideas; he that reads books of science, though without any fixed desire of improvement, will grow more knowing; he that entertains himself with moral or religious treatises, will imperceptibly advance in goodness; the ideas which are often offered to the mind, will at last find a lucky moment when it is disposed to receive them.

It is, therefore, urged without reason, as a discouragement to writers, that there are already books sufficient in the world; that all the topics of persuasion have been discussed, and every important question clearly stated and justly decided; and that, therefore, there is no room to hope, that pigmies should conquer where heroes have been defeated, or that the petty copiers of the present time should advance the great work of reformation, which their predecessors were forced to leave unfinished.

Whatever be the present extent of human knowledge, it is not only finite, and therefore in its own nature capable of increase; but so narrow, that almost every understanding may, by a diligent application of its powers, hope to enlarge it. It is, however, not necessary, that a man should forbear to write, till he has discovered some truth unknown before; he may be sufficiently useful, by only diversify-

ing the surface of knowledge, and luring the mind by a new appearance to a second view of those beauties which it had passed over inattentively before. Every writer may find intellects correspondent to his own, to whom his expressions are familiar, and his thoughts congenial; and, perhaps, truth is often more successfully propagated by men of moderate abilities, who, adopting the opinions of others, have no care but to explain them clearly, than by subtile speculatists and curious searchers, who exact from their readers powers equal to their own, and if their fabrics of science be strong, take no care to render them accessible.

For my part, I do not regret the hours which I have laid out in these little compositions. That the world has grown apparently better, since the publication of the Adventurer, I have not observed; but am willing to think, that many have been affected by single sentiments, of which it is their business to renew the impression; that many have caught hints of truth, which it is now their duty to pursue; and that those who have received no improvement, have wanted not opportunity but intention to improve.

T.

N° 138. SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1754.

Quid purè tranquillet? bonos, an dulce lucellum,
An secretum iter, et fallentis semita vitæ? HOR.

Whether the tranquil mind and pure,
Honours or wealth our bliss insure;
Or down through life unknown to stray,
Where lonely leads the silent way. FRANCIS.

HAVING considered the importance of authors to the welfare of the public, I am led by a natural train of thought, to reflect on their condition with regard to themselves; and to inquire what degree of happiness or vexation is annexed to the difficult and laborious employment of providing instruction or entertainment for mankind.

In estimating the pain or pleasure of any particular state, every man, indeed, draws his decisions from his own breast, and cannot with certainty determine, whether other minds are affected by the same causes in the same manner. Yet by this criterion we must be content to judge, because no other can be obtained; and, indeed, we have no reason to think it very fallacious, for excepting here and there an anomalous mind, which either does not feel like others, or dissembles its sensibility, we find men unanimously concur in attributing happiness or misery to particular conditions, as they agree in acknowledging the cold of winter and the heat of autumn.

If we apply to authors themselves for an account of their state, it will appear very little to deserve envy;

for they have in all ages been addicted to complaint. The neglect of learning, the ingratitude of the present age, and the absurd preference by which ignorance and dullness often obtain favour and rewards, have been from age to age topics of invective; and few have left their names to posterity, without some appeal to future candour from the perverseness and malice of their own times.

I have, nevertheless, been often inclined to doubt, whether authors, however querulous, are in reality more miserable than their fellow-mortals. The present life is to all a state of infelicity; every man, like an author, believes himself to merit more than he obtains, and solaces the present with the prospect of the future; others, indeed, suffer those disappointments in silence, of which the writer complains, to shew how well he has learnt the art of lamentation.

There is at least one gleam of felicity, of which few writers have missed the enjoyment: he whose hopes have so far overpowered his fears, as that he has resolved to stand forth a candidate for fame, seldom fails to amuse himself, before his appearance, with pleasing scenes of affluence or honour; while his fortune is yet under the regulation of fancy, he easily models it to his wish, suffers no thoughts of critics or rivals to intrude upon his mind, but counts over the bounties of patronage, or listens to the voice of praise.

Some there are, that talk very luxuriously of the second period of an author's happiness, and tell of the tumultuous raptures of invention, when the mind riots in imagery, and the choice stands suspended between different sentiments.

These pleasures, I believe, may sometimes be indulged to those, who come to a subject of disquisition with minds full of ideas, and with fancies so vigorous, as easily to excite, select, and arrange them.

To write is, indeed, no unpleasing employment, when one sentiment readily produces another, and both ideas and expressions present themselves at the first summons: but such happiness, the greatest genius does not always obtain; and common writers know it only to such a degree, as to credit its possibility. Composition is, for the most part, an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance, to which the mind is dragged by necessity or resolution, and from which the attention is every moment starting to more delightful amusements.

It frequently happens, that a design which, when considered at a distance, gave flattering hopes of facility, mocks us in the execution with unexpected difficulties; the mind which, while it considered it in the gross, imagined itself amply furnished with materials, finds sometimes an unexpected barrenness and vacuity, and wonders whither all those ideas are vanished, which a little before seemed struggling for emission.

Sometimes many thoughts present themselves; but so confused and unconnected, that they are not without difficulty reduced to method, or concatenated in a regular and dependent series: the mind falls at once into a labyrinth, of which neither the beginning nor end can be discovered, and toils and struggles without progress or extrication.

It is asserted by Horace, that 'if matter be once got together, words will be found with very little difficulty:' a position which, though sufficiently plausible to be inserted in poetical precepts, is by no means strictly and philosophically true. If words were naturally and necessarily consequential to sentiments, it would always follow, that he who has most knowledge must have most eloquence, and that every man would clearly express what he fully understood: yet we find, that to think, and to discourse, are often the

qualities of different persons: and many books might surely be produced, where just and noble sentiments are degraded and obscured by unsuitable diction.

Words, therefore, as well as things, claim the care of an author. Indeed of many authors, and those not useless or contemptible, words are almost the only care: many make it their study, not so much to strike out new sentiments, as to recommend those which are already known to more favourable notice by fairer decorations; but every man, whether he copies or invents, whether he delivers his own thoughts or those of another, has often found himself deficient in the power of expression, big with ideas which he could not utter, obliged to ransack his memory for terms adequate to his conceptions, and at last unable to impress upon his reader the image existing in his own mind.

It is one of the common distresses of a writer, to be within a word of a happy period, to want only a single epithet to give amplification its full force, to require only a correspondent term in order to finish a paragraph with elegance, and make one of its members answer to the other: but these deficiencies cannot always be supplied; and after long study and vexation, the passage is turned anew, and the web unwoven that was so nearly finished.

But when thoughts and words are collected and adjusted, and the whole composition at last concluded, it seldom gratifies the author, when he comes coolly and deliberately to review it, with the hopes which had been excited in the fury of the performance: novelty always captivates the mind; as our thoughts rise fresh upon us, we readily believe them just and original, which, when the pleasure of production is over, we find to be mean and common, or borrowed from the works of others, and supplied by memory rather than invention.

But though it should happen that the writer finds no such faults in his performance, he is still to remember, that he looks upon it with partial eyes: and when he considers, how much men who could judge of others with great exactness, have often failed of judging of themselves, he will be afraid of deciding too hastily in his own favour, or of allowing himself to contemplate with too much complacence, treasure that has not yet been brought to the test, nor past the only trial that can stamp its value.

From the public, and only from the public, is he to await a confirmation of his claim, and a final justification of self-esteem; but the public is not easily persuaded to favour an author. If mankind were left to judge for themselves, it is reasonable to imagine, that of such writings, at least, as describe the movements of the human passions, and of which every man carries the archetype within him, a just opinion would be formed; but whoever has remarked the fate of books, must have found it governed by other causes, than general consent arising from general conviction. If a new performance happens not to fall into the hands of some, who have courage to tell, and authority to propagate their opinion, it often remains long in obscurity, and perhaps perishes unknown and unexamined. A few, a very few, commonly constitute the taste of the time; the judgment which they have once pronounced, some are too lazy to discuss, and some too timorous to contradict: it may, however, be, I think, observed, that their power is greater to depress than exalt, as mankind are more credulous of censure than of praise.

This perversion of the public judgment is not to be rashly numbered amongst the miseries of an author; since it commonly serves, after miscarriage, to reconcile him to himself. Because the world has sometimes passed an unjust sentence, he readily concludes the

sentence unjust by which his performance is condemned; because some have been exalted above their merits by partiality, he is sure to ascribe the success of a rival, not to the merit of his work, but the zeal of his patrons. Upon the whole, as the author seems to share all the common miseries of life, he appears to partake likewise of its lenitives and abatements.

T

N° 139. TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1754.

Ipse viam tantum potui docuisse repertam
Aonas ad montes, longéque ostendere Musas,
Plaudentes celsa choreas in vertice rupis. VIDA.

I only pointed out the paths that lead
The panting youth to steep Parnassus' head,
And shew'd the tuneful muses from afar,
Mixt in a solemn choir and dancing there. PITT.

He that undertakes to superintend the morals and the taste of the public, should attentively consider, what are the peculiar irregularities and defects that characterize the times: for though some have contended, that men have always been vicious and foolish in the same degree; yet their vices and follies are known to have been not only different but opposite in their kind. The disease of the time has been sometimes a fever, and sometimes a lethargy; and he, therefore, who should always prescribe the same remedy, would be justly scorned as a quack, the dispenser of a nostrum, which, however efficacious, must, if indiscriminately applied, produce as much evil as good. There was a time, when every man, who was ambitious of religion or virtue, enlisted himself in a crusade, or buried himself in a hermitage: and he who should then have declaimed against lukewarmness and scepticism, would have acted just as absurdly as he, who should warn the present age against

priestcraft and superstition, or set himself gravely to prove the lawfulness of pleasure, to lure the hermit from his cell, and deliver the penitent from suicide.

But as vicious manners have not differed more than vicious taste, there was a time when every literary character was disgraced by an impertinent ostentation of skill in abstruse science, and an habitual familiarity with books written in the dead languages: every man, therefore, was a pedant, in proportion as he desired to be thought a scholar. The preacher and the pleader strung together classical quotations with the same labour, affectation, and insignificance; truths however obvious, and opinions however indisputable, were illustrated and confirmed by the testimonies of Tully or Horace; and Seneca and Epictetus were solemnly cited, to evince the certainty of death or the fickleness of fortune. The discourses of Taylor are crowded with extracts from the writers of the porch and the academy; and it is scarcely possible to forbear smiling at a marginal note of Lord Coke, in which he gravely acquaints his reader with an excellence that he might otherwise have overlooked: 'This,' says he, 'is the thirty-third time that Virgil hath been quoted in this work.' The mixture, however, is so preposterous, that to those who can read Coke with pleasure, these passages will appear like a dancer who should intrude on the solemnity of a senate; and to those who have a taste only for polite literature, like a fountain or a palm-tree in the deserts of Arabia.

It appears by the essays of Montaigne and La Motte le Vayer, that this affectation extended to France; but the absurdity was too gross to remain long after the revival of literature. It was ridiculed here so early as the 'Silent Woman' of Ben Jonson; and afterwards more strongly and professedly in the character of Hudibras, who decorates his flimsy ora-

tions with gawdy patches of Latin, and scraps of tissue from the schoolmen. The same task was also undertaken in France by Balzac, in a satire called 'Barbon.'

Wit is more rarely disappointed of its purpose than wisdom; and it is no wonder that this species of pedantry, in itself so ridiculous and despicable, was soon brought into contempt by those powers, against which truth and rectitude have not always maintained their dignity. The features of learning began insensibly to lose their austerity, and her air became engaging and easy: philosophy was now decorated by the graces.

The abstruse truths of astronomy were explained by Fontenelle to a lady by moonlight; justness and propriety of thought and sentiment were discussed by Bouhours amid the delicacies of a garden; and Algarotti introduced the Newtonian theory of light and colours to the toilet. Addison remarks that Socrates was said to have brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men: 'And I,' says he, 'shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses.'

But this purpose has in some measure been defeated by its success; and we have been driven from one extreme with such precipitation, that we have not stopped in the medium, but gone on to the other.

Learning has been divested of the peculiarities of a college dress, that she might mix in polite assemblies, and be admitted to domestic familiarity; but by this means she has been confounded with ignorance and levity. Those who before could distinguish her only by the singularity of her garb, cannot now distinguish her at all; and whenever she asserts the dignity of her character, she has reason to fear that ridicule, which is inseparably connected with the remembrance

of her dress; she is therefore in danger of being driven back to the college, where, such is her transformation, she may at last be refused admittance; for, instead of learning's having elevated conversation, conversation has degraded learning; and the barbarous and inaccurate manner in which an extemporary speaker expresses a hasty conception, is now contended to be the rule by which an author should write. It seems, therefore, that to correct the taste of the present generation, literary subjects should be again introduced among the polite and gay, without labouring too much to disguise them like common prattle; and that conversation should be weeded of folly and impertinence, of common-place rhetoric, gingling phrases, and trite repartee, which are echoed from one visitor to another without the labour of thought, and have been suffered by better understandings in the dread of an imputation of pedantry. I am of opinion, that with this view Swift wrote his 'Polite Conversation;' and where he has plucked up a weed, the writers who succeed him should endeavour to plant a flower. With this view, Criticism has in this paper been intermixed with subjects of greater importance; and it is hoped that our fashionable conversation will no longer be the disgrace of rational beings; and that men of genius and literature will not give the sanction of their example to popular folly, and suffer their evenings to pass in hearing or in telling the exploits of a pointer, discussing a method to prevent wines from being pricked, or solving a difficult case in back-gammon.

I would not, however, be thought solicitous to confine the conversation even of scholars to literary subjects, but only to prevent such subjects from being totally excluded. And it may be remarked that the present insignificance of conversation has a very extensive effect: excellence that is not understood will

never be rewarded, and without hope of reward few will labour to excel; every writer will be tempted to negligence, in proportion as he despises the judgment of those who are to determine his merit; and as it is no man's interest to write that which the public is not disposed to read, the productions of the press will always be accommodated to popular taste, and in proportion as the world is inclined to be ignorant, little will be taught them. Thus the Greek and Roman architecture are discarded for the novelties of China; the Ruins of Palmyra, and the copies of the capital pictures of Correggio, are neglected for gothic designs, and burlesque political prints; and the tinsel of a Burletta has more admirers than the gold of Shakspeare, though it now receives new splendour from the mint, and, like a medal, is illustrious, not only for intrinsic worth, but for beauty of expression.

Perhaps it may be thought, that if this be, indeed, the state of learning and taste, an attempt to improve it by a private hand is romantic, and the hope of success chimerical: but to this I am not solicitous to give other answer, than that such an attempt is consistent with the character in which this paper is written; and that the Adventurer can assert, upon classical authority, that in brave attempts it is glorious even to fail.

Z

N° 140. SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1754.

Desine Mænalios, mea tibia, desine cantus. VIRG.

Now cease, my pipe, now cease, Mænalian strains. WARTON.

When this work was first planned, it was determined, that whatever might be the success, it should not be continued as a paper, till it became unwieldy as a

book: for no immediate advantage would have induced the Adventurer to write what, like a newspaper, was designed but for a day; and he knew, that the pieces of which it would consist, might be multiplied till they were thought too numerous to collect, and too costly to purchase, even by those who should allow them to be excellent in their kind. It was soon agreed, that four volumes, when they should be printed in a pocket size, would circulate better than more, and that scarce any of the purposes of publication could be effected by less; the work, therefore, was limited to four volumes, and four volumes are now completed.

A moral writer, of whatever abilities, who labours to reclaim those to whom vice is become habitual, and who are become veterans in infidelity, must surely labour to little purpose. Vice is a gradual and easy descent, where it first deviates from the level of innocence: but the declivity at every pace becomes more steep, and those who descend, descend every moment with greater rapidity. As a moralist, therefore, I determined to mark the first insensible gradation to ill; to caution against those acts which are not generally believed to incur guilt, but of which indubitable vice and hopeless misery are the natural and almost necessary consequences.

As I was upon these principles to write for the Young and the Gay; for those who are entering the path of life, I knew that it would be necessary to amuse the imagination while I was approaching the heart; and that I could not hope to fix the attention, but by engaging the passions. I have, therefore, sometimes led them into the regions of fancy, and sometimes held up before them the mirror of life; I have concatenated events, rather than deduced consequences by logical reasoning; and have exhibited scenes of prosperity and distress, as more forcibly persuasive than the rhetoric of declamation.

In the story of Melissa, I have endeavoured to repress romantic hopes, by which the reward of laborious industry is despised; and have founded affluence and honour upon an act of generous integrity, to which few would have thought themselves obliged. In the life of Opsinous, I have shewn the danger of the first speculative defection, and endeavoured to demonstrate the necessary dependence of Virtue upon Religion. Amurath's first advance to cruelty was striking a dog. The wretchedness of Hassan was produced merely by the want of positive virtue; and that of Mirza by the solitariness of his devotion. The distress of lady Freeman arises from a common and allowed deviation from truth; and in the two papers upon marriage, the importance of minute particulars is illustrated and displayed. With this clue, the reader will be able to discover the same design in almost every paper that I have written, which may easily be known from the rest by having no signature* at the bottom. Among these, however, Number forty-four was the voluntary contribution of a stranger, and Number forty-two† the gift of a friend; so were the first hints on which I wrote the story of Eugenio, and the letter signed TIM. COGDIE.

I did not, however, undertake to execute this scheme alone; not only because I wanted sufficient leisure, but because some degree of sameness is produced by the peculiarities of every writer; and it was thought that the conceptions and expression of another, whose pieces should have a general coincidence with mine, would produce variety, and by increasing entertainment facilitate instruction.

With this view the pieces that appear in the begin-

* By signature is meant the letter, or mark, placed on the left hand side of the page; not the subscribed names of the assumed characters in which several of the papers are written.

† Said, by mistake, to be number forty-seven, in former editions.

ning of the work signed A, were procured; but this resource soon failing, I was obliged to carry on the publication alone, except some casual supplies, till I obtained from the gentlemen who have distinguished their pieces by the letters T and Z* such assistance as I most wished. Of their views and expectations, some account has been already given in Number one hundred and thirty-seven, and Number one hundred and thirty-nine. But there is one particular, in which the critical pieces concur in the general design of this paper, which has not been mentioned: those who can judge of literary excellence, will easily discover the Sacred Writings to have a divine origin by their manifest superiority; he, therefore, who displays the beauties and defects of a classic author, whether ancient or modern, puts into the hands of those to whom he communicates critical knowledge, a new testimonial of the truth of Christianity.

Besides the assistance of these gentlemen, I have received some voluntary contributions which would have done honour to any collection: the allegorical letter from Night, signed S; the story of Fidelia, in three parts, signed Y; the letter signed TIM WILDGOOSE; Number forty-four and Number ninety marked with an &, were sent by unknown hands.

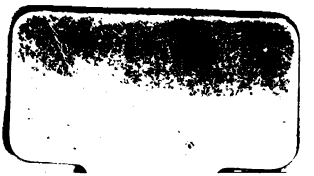
But whatever was the design to which I directed my part of this work, I will not pretend, that the view with which I undertook it was wholly disinterested; or that I would have engaged in a periodical paper, if I had not considered, that though it would not require deep researches and abstracted speculation, yet it would admit much of that novelty which nature can now supply, and afford me opportunity to excel, if I possessed the power; as the pencil of a

* The pieces signed Z are by the Rev. Mr. Warton, whose translation of Virgil's Pastorals and Georgics would alone sufficiently distinguish him as a genius and a scholar.

master is as easily distinguished in still life, as in a Hercules or a Venus, a landscape or a battle. I confess, that to this work I was incited, not only by a desire to propagate virtue, but to gratify myself; nor has the private wish, which was involved in the public, been disappointed. I have no cause to complain, that the Adventurer has been injuriously neglected; or that I have been denied that praise, the hope of which animated my labour and cheered my weariness: I have been pleased, in proportion as I have been known in this character; and as the fears in which I made the first experiment are past, I have subscribed this paper with my name. But the hour is hastening, in which, whatever praise or censure I have acquired by these compositions, if they are remembered at all, will be remembered with equal indifference, and the tenour of them only will afford me comfort. Time, who is impatient to date my last paper, will shortly moulder the hand that is now writing it in the dust, and still the breast that now throbs at the reflection: but let not this be read as something that relates only to another; for a few years only can divide the eye that is now reading from the hand that has written. This awful truth, however obvious, and however reiterated, is yet frequently forgotten; for, surely, if we did not lose our remembrance, or at least our sensibility, that view would always predominate in our lives, which alone can afford us comfort when we die.

JOHN HAWKESWORTH.

Bromley, in Kent,
March 8, 1754.

END OF VOL. XXV.

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